

S E R M O N S
O N
P R A C T I C A L S U B J E C T S.

V O L. I I



227 9/12

S E R M O N S

O N

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS:

Extracted chiefly from the

WORKS OF DIVINES OF THE
LAST CENTURY.

By RICHARD BURN, LL. D.

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF CARLISLE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXIV.

S. E. P. O. N. S.

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS

WORKS OF DIVINES OF THE
LAST CENTURY

BY RICHARD BURN, M.D.
CHANCELLOR OF THE DIocese OF CAMBRIDGE

IN FOUR VOLUMES



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. CADELL IN THE STRAND.
MDCCLXXIV.

P R E F A C E.

THE method of instruction from the pulpit, since the revival of literature in this kingdom, hath undergone various changes. During the reigns of king Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, queen Mary, and queen Elizabeth, it was, from the circumstances of the times, merely controversial; as it was also in a great measure in the reign of king James the First, but altered for the worse, by an ostentation of learning, a quaintness of expression, and an affectation of puns and quibbles. In the former part of the reign of king Charles the First, the style became more rational and temperate. But during that whole process of time, those sermons, which kings and queens constantly frequented and listened to with attention,

VOL. I.

A

were

P R E F A C E.

were what would have been thought at this day unsufferably tedious and insipid.

Upon the downfall of episcopacy, in the latter end of the reign of king Charles the First, came in an unlettered tribe, who did not mend the matter at all. They did not indeed (for a very obvious reason) weary the audience with Latin and Greek quotations from the fathers, but what they could they did; they ransacked the bible from one end to the other for proofs and illustrations, which was an inexhaustible fund for ekeing out an extemporary effusion to any given length; and an hour-glass was placed by them, whereby to estimate the quantity of their labour.

But though they preached extempore, yet it was not commonly without some kind of preconceived plan, which contained the sketch and outlines of their intended discourse; which, for the sake of
memory,

P R E F A C E.

memory, was divided and subdivided into numberless branches. And this indeed was the case in a great measure of their more learned predecessors. To furnish out a sermon of an hour, or (as it sometimes happened) two hours long, it was necessary to take a large compass, and divide the subject into many heads, and those into others and others again; and the same notes of transition, as 2dly, 3dly, 4thly, recurring over and over, the hearer was bewildered, and what was intended for perspicuity became the occasion of confusion.

The reign of Charles the Second was esteemed, and not undeservedly, an age of learning; not from any extraordinary Mæcenas-like encouragement from the prince, but from this cause: During the usurpation of Oliver Cromwel, most of the clergy of liberal education and genius, being displaced from their offices in the church, had leisure to apply those faculties

P R E F A C E.

to study, which, if they had continued in their functions, would have been employed in the scenes of active life. These, upon the restoration of king Charles the Second, shone out with redoubled lustre. Those twelve years of usurpation, which (so far as one can judge from the printed discourses of those times) did not produce one rational preacher, laid the foundation of a glorious superstructure in the next succeeding period. But still the length of sermons was not much diminished, and in that age of dissipation began to be looked upon as a grievance. Insomuch that the Hon. Robert Boyle composed an essay on purpose of consolation against long sermons, but in the conclusion he takes occasion to wish nevertheless that the clergy would confine themselves to their hour. Had he lived half a century longer, he would have found a considerable reformation in this particular. Perhaps we may be now hastening into the other extreme.

It

P R E F A C E.

It seemeth indeed to be somewhat unaccountable, that a congregation, who would think themselves cheated and ill-used if they had not a sermon preached to them, yet will universally agree, that the shorter it is, the better. But that is not the business of the present publication; being intended only to revive (and as it were modernize) certain works of genius, which were the productions chiefly of divines of the last century; and that, not of those divines of that period, who are yet in deserved esteem and reputation, but of such whose works are almost consigned to oblivion; and consequently this revival of them may have something even of novelty to recommend it.

The names of the Authors, from whose writings the several Discourses are extracted, are inserted respectively in the body of the work.

PREFACE

It is not indeed to be supposed, that a congregation, who would think themselves elevated and improved by the preaching of a sermon, would not be equally ready to receive the instruction which the pastor is the better. But that it is not the business of the present publication, being intended only to revive (and as it were modernize) certain works of genius, which were the productions chiefly of divines of the last century; and that not of those divines of that period, who are yet in general esteem and reputation, but of such whose works are almost consigned to oblivion; and consequently this revival of them may have something even of novelty to recommend it.

The names of the Authors, from whose writings the several Discourses are extracted, are inserted respectively in the body of the works.

Vol. I. and A General View

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Obedience indispensably necessary to Happiness.

MATTHEW VII. 21, 22, 23.

NOT every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name have done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that WORK INIQUITY.

Page 1

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N II.

Unfruitfulness of Sin.

ROMANS VI. 21.

*What fruit had ye then in those things,
whereof ye are now ashamed? For the
end of those things is death.* Page 18

S E R M O N III.

Of numbering our Days.

PSALM XXXIX. 5.

*Lord, let me know my end, and the number
of my days, that I may be certified how
long I have to live.* 38

S E R M O N IV.

Of common Swearing.

MATTHEW V. 34, 35.

*I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by
Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the
earth, for it is his footstool; neither by
Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great
King.* 57

S E R M O N

CONTENTS.

SERMON V.

Proofs and Instances of a Divine Providence.

ACTS XVII. 28.

In him we live, and move, and have our being. Page 76

SERMON VI.

The Testimony of Conscience.

I JOHN III. 21.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. 94

SERMON VII.

What Repentance and Faith shall be effectual to Salvation.

MARK I. 14, 15.

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel. 112

SERMON

CONTENTS.

SERMON VIII.

Prayer ineffectual without Obedience.

MATTHEW VII. 7, 8.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Page 129

SERMON IX.

The Universal Judgment.

2 COR. V. 10, 11.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.—Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. 146

SERMON

CONTENTS.

SERMON X.

Christ the Author of Rest unto our Souls.

MATT. XI. 28.

Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Page 164

SERMON XI.

Folly of losing the Soul.

MATT. IV. 8, 9, 10.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them:

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me:

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 180

SERMON

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N XII.

Baseness of Ingratitude.

JUDGES VIII. 34, 35.

And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side.

Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel. Page 201

S E R M O N XIII.

Caution against Hypocrisy.

LUKE XII. 1. latter part.

— *Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.* 219

S E R M O N XIV.

Behaviour in Sickness.

ISAIAH XXXVIII. 1.

— *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* 238

S E R M O N

CONTENTS.

SERMON XV.

Of the Nature of Humility.

I PET. V. 5.

—Be clothed with humility: For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Page 257

SERMON XVI.

Loveliness and Reasonableness of Humility.

I PETER III. part of ver. 4.

—The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 277

SERMON XVII.

Humility the Source of Ease and Quietness.

PROV. XXIX. 23.

A man's pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. 297

SERMON

CONTENTS.

SERMON XVIII.

Advantages of Humility.

ROM. XII. 3.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly. Page 316

SERMON XIX.

Humility how to be expressed.

JOHN XIII. 14.

If I then, your lord and master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 334

SERMON XX.

Our Obligations to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I COR. X. 16.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 354

SERMON

CONTENTS.

S E R M O N XXI.

Self-examination before the Communion.

I COR. XI. 28.

*Let a man examine himself, and so let him
eat of that bread, and drink of that
cup.*

Page 372

S E R M O N XXII.

SACRAMENT : Preparation for it.

I COR. XI. 31.

*For if we would judge ourselves, we should
not be judged.*

394

S E R M O N XXIII.

Charity preparatory to the Sacrament.

I JOHN III. 14.

*We know that we have passed from death unto
life, because we love the brethren.*

412

S E R M O N XXIV.

A Discourse on Drunkenness.

MATT. XVII. 15.

*Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is
lunatic, and sore-vexed; for oft-times he
falleth*

CONTENTS.

*falleth into the fire, and oft into the
water.*

431

SERMON XXV.

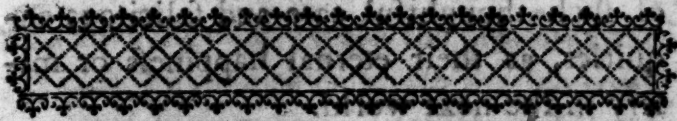
On Psalmody.

Ps. XLVII. 1.

—O sing unto God with the voice of
melody.

456

SER-



SERMON I.

Obedience indispensably necessary to
Happiness.

[FROM KETTLEWELL'S Measures of Obedience.]

MATTHEW VII. 21, 22, 23.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but
he that doth the will of my Father which
is in Heaven.*

*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,
have we not prophesied in thy name, and in
thy name have cast out devils; and in thy
name have done many wonderful works?*

*And then will I profess unto them, I never
knew you: depart from me ye that WORK
INIQUITY.*

AMONG all those things which em-
ploy the minds of religious and con-
siderate men, there is none that is a matter

VOL. I.

B

of

2 *Obedience indispensably necessary*

of such thoughtful care and solicitous enquiries, as their eternal happiness or misery in the next world.

The conditions of obtaining the one and avoiding the other, are plainly revealed to us in the Gospel of Christ. And this depends upon our obedience or disobedience to the laws thereof. When we shall be brought before God's tribunal, and stand to be judged according to those laws which are proclaimed to us in the Gospel; it will be only our having kept them, and repented of all such transgressions of them as we have wilfully been guilty of, which can capacitate us to be rewarded by them.

For it is just with them as it is with all other laws; they never promise any thing but to obedience, but threaten and punish all that disobey. Whosoever breaks and despises them is guilty: they do not comfort, but accuse; not acquit, but condemn him: for there is no law that is wisely ordered but is sufficiently guarded against disobedience, and backed with such punishments as will make it every man's interest to fulfil and keep it. The evil threatened must

2

must always by far exceed the pleasure that is reaped by disobedience; so that no man may have any temptation sufficient to bear him out in sin, or ever hope to be a gainer by his transgression.

This is the tenor of all wise laws, whose enactors have both wisdom and power sufficient to defend them. They have dreadful punishments annexed to them, which take place upon disobedience; they encourage and reward the obedient, but severely punish all that dare presume to disobey.

And this is most eminently seen in all the laws of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He gave them for the completest rules to men's lives, and has annexed to them most glorious promises to encourage our obedience; but has denounced woe and intolerable punishments to the disobedient.

He never intended his laws for an entertainment of our eyes, but for a rule of our actions; not for a matter of speculation, but of practice; not to be talked and discoursed of, but to be owned in our lives, and served by obedience. He is our king, and

4 Obedience indispensably necessary

issues out his laws as the instruments of his government: He is our lord, and they are rules for his service. They must be guides of our lives and actions. It is not enough to know and discourse of them; but as ever we hope to live by them, we must do and keep them: for in the end they will be available to no man's happiness but his who has conscientiously performed them.

In Christ Jesus, or the Christian religion, (says St. Paul) nothing avails but *keeping the commandments of God* *.—Blessed are they (says St. John) *who do the commandments, for they only have right to the tree of life* †.—It is not an idle wish, or ineffectual endeavour; but a thorough practice and performance of Christ's laws, which can continue us in his love, and approve us righteous in his judgment. *If ye keep my commandments* (says he) *ye shall abide in my love* ‡.—*Let no man deceive you; for it is he only that doth righteousness, who in God's account is righteous* §.

* 1 Cor vii. 19.

† Rev. xii. 14.

‡ John xv. 10.

§ John iii. 7.

No man therefore will be acquitted and rewarded at the judgment day, barely for knowing and discoursing, for wishing or desiring; but only for working and obeying. Such only the gospel reckons for true servants now: *his servants ye are*, says the apostle *, not whom you confess in words, but whom *in actions you obey*. And such only he will honour and reward then.—Our Saviour himself tells us, that when he shall come to judgment, he will *reward every man according to his works* †. And he repeats it again in his declaration to St. John ‡, *Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be*. And so it was in that prophetick sight of the last judgment, which this same apostle had vouchsafed to him, in the twentieth chapter of the *Revelations* ||: For there we are told, when the earth and the sea gave up the dead which were in them, and they all, both small and great, stood before the throne, and him that sate

* Rom. vi. 16.

† Matt. xvi. 27.

‡ Rev. xxii. 12.

|| ver. 11, 12, 13.

6 Obedience indispensably necessary

thereon; they were judged every man according to his works.

His laws then Christ has given us, not for talk and discourse, but for action and practice; and his promises he has annexed to them, not as rewards of idleness, but only of active service and obedience; wherein if men fail, God's rewards belong not to them; they can make no claim or colourable pretence to them, because they cannot shew that which is to be rewarded by him.

Nay, farther; if men *disobey*, they are not only excluded from all glorious hopes, but are moreover put into a desperate state of fears and dreadful expectations: for God has backed his laws with *threatenings* as well as promises. And as they propose most noble rewards to all that are obedient; so likewise do they breathe out most intolerable punishments to those that do the contrary. For every man, at the last day, will be declared a child of wrath, who is a son of disobedience. And he shall most certainly be damned who dies, without repentance and amendment, in works which are wilfully and deliberately sinful. Christ's
gospel

SERM. L. *to Happiness.*

gospel has already judged this long beforehand; and at that day he will confirm it. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his angels*, that is, when he shall come with his royal attendance to judge the world, *he will take vengeance* (says St. Paul) *on all them that OBEY not his gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord**. When he comes in state, with ten thousands of his saints, it will be to execute judgment upon all that are ungodly, for all the ungodly DEEDS which they have committed †. And when our Lord himself gives a relation of his proceedings at that day, he tells us, that whosoever they be, or whatsoever they may pretend, if their works have been disobedient, they shall hear no sentence from him but what consigns them to eternal punishment: *I will profess unto them*, says he, *I know you not; depart from me, ye that work iniquity ‡*.

This will be the method of Christ's judgment; and these the measures of his sentence.

* 2 Theff. i. 7, 8. † Jude 14, 15. ‡ Matt. vii. 23.

8 *Obedience indispensably necessary.* 1782

And indeed it would be the height of folly and madness to expect he should do otherwise, and to fancy, that when he comes to judge us according to the laws of his gospel, he should absolve and reward us, when in our works and actions we have transgressed them: for this would be to thwart his own rule, and to go cross to his own measures; it would be to encourage those whom his laws threaten, to acquit such as they condemn, and (in short) not to judge according to them, as he has expressly declared he will, but against them.

If we would know then, what condition we shall be adjudged to in the next world, we must examine what our obedience hath been in this. We can have no assurance of a favourable sentence in that day, but only the doing of our duty. Our last doom shall turn, not upon our knowing or not knowing, our willing or not willing; but upon our obeying or disobeying. It is in vain to cast about for other marks, and to seek after other evidences: nothing less than this performance of our duty, can avail us unto life;

SERMON I. *Upon the Happiness of the*

life; and, by the merits of Christ, and the grace of his gospel, this will.

And thus we see, what those terms and conditions are, which the gospel indispensably exacts of us. It is nothing less than a working service and obedience; the enquiry to be made at that day being only this, whether we have done what was commanded us. If we have performed what was required of us, we shall be pronounced righteous, and sentenced to eternal life; but if we have wilfully transgressed, and wrought wickedness without amendment and repentance, we shall then be declared incorrigible sinners, and adjudged to everlasting death.

This indeed is a very great truth, but yet such as very few are willing to see and consider of. For obedience is a very laborious service, and a painful task: and they are not many in number who will be content to undergo it. And if a man may have no just hopes less than this, the case of most dying men is very deplorable. But as men will live and die in sin, so they will live and die in hopes too. And therefore they catch

10 *Obedience indispensably necessary*

catch at softer terms, and build upon an easier condition. And because the gospel promiseth salvation, and an happy sentence, to *faith, love, repentance, our being in Christ, our knowing Christ*; and other things besides obedience; they conclude that they shall be acquitted, upon the account of any, or all of these, though they do not obey with them. They make faith, love, repentance, and the rest, to be something separate from obedience; something which will save them, when that is wanting. So that if they be in Christ, if they know and believe with the mind, and love and repent in their hearts; their hope is to be absolved at the last day, be their lives and actions never so disobedient.

But this is a most dangerous and fatal error: for it makes men secure from danger, till they are past all possibility of recovering out of it; and causes them to trust to a false report so long, till it lets them drop into hell, and sink down into perdition.

And although it be sufficiently evident from what has been already said, that our obedience

obedience is that only thing which will be admitted as a just plea; and as a qualification able to save us in the last day; yet in order fully to subvert all these false grounds, whereupon men support their pernicious hopes and sinful lives together, it is to be considered, that all those other terms and conditions, whereto the gospel sometimes promises pardon and happiness, save us no otherwise, than by being springs and principles of our obedience. They are not opposed to our doing of our duty, and keeping the commandments; but imply it. For when pardon is promised to faith, to love, to repentance, or any thing else; it is never promised to them separate from obedience, but as containing it. It is a working faith, an obedient repentance, an active love that will save us; a faith, love, and repentance, which do not overlook obedience, but accompany and produce it. So that first or last, obedience is still that, wherein all the rest must concenter and agree; that alone condition which our judge will accept, and which we may safely trust to.

More

More particularly: The condition of our acceptance, and whereto life and pardon are promised at the last day, is sometimes in scripture called KNOWLEDGE; or, what is only a more particular way of knowing, a knowing upon evidence or testimony, that is, FAITH. *This is life eternal* (says our lord himself) *to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent* *. And as for faith, which is the particular way of knowledge among us christians, who owe all that we know, in order to heaven and happiness, to the witness and testimony of Jesus Christ; the places which promise life and pardon unto it, are to be met within abundance. *Whosoever believeth on me,* says our Saviour, *shall not perish but have everlasting life* †. — And again, *This is the will of him that sent me, that whosoever believeth on me, may have everlasting life* ‡. — And when he sends out his apostles after his resurrection, to proclaim the terms of mercy and salvation to all the world, he bids them say, *Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved* ||.

* John xvii. 3.

† John vi. 40.

‡ John iii. 15, 16.

|| Mark xvi. 16.

But now this *knowledge*, and this *faith*, under the influences of the divine grace, are the very fundamental cause, and natural spring, of all our christian service and obedience. For it is because we believe and know Jesus to be the lord, and what his laws are, and how he will deal both with the keepers and the breakers of them, that we set ourselves in very deed to observe and keep them. And for this reason it is, because our faith and knowledge are so powerful a cause and principle of our obedience, that God speaks so great things of them, and has made such valuable promises to them. He never intends eternally to reward the faith and knowledge of our minds, further than they effect the obedience of our actions, and become an *obedient knowledge*, and a *working faith*.

AGAIN: This condition of our acceptance, is sometimes called in scripture the **BEING IN CHRIST**. Thus St. Paul says, *there is no condemnation to them, who ARE IN CHRIST JESUS**; that is, who profess the Christian religion.

* Rom. viii. 1.

And

14 *Obedience indispensably necessary*

And the reason is, because this profession is a most ready and effectual means to make men practise and obey it. For to be in Christ, is to live under the more especial aid and influences of his holy spirit, under the preaching of his word, the solemn return of holy prayers, the administration of the sacraments, and all the other means and advantages of grace and obedience. And because this is so powerful a principle of our obedient service; therefore it is, that God hath promised to it that life and pardon, which is the inseparable reward of obedience itself.

FURTHER: That condition, which the gospel exacts of us, as the terms whereupon we must hope to find life and pardon at the last day, is oftentimes called REPENTANCE.—Now repentance, in the constant and plain notion of the holy scriptures, is nothing else but this; namely, such a virtuous alteration of the mind and purpose, as begets a like virtuous change in the life and practice. It begins in our thoughts and resolutions, and is made perfect in our works and actions. It first casts out of our
minds

minds all false principles and foolish judgments, of the desirableness of sin, and the dreadfulneſs of virtue; all opinions that hinder a good life, and encourage wickedneſs; all firm purpoſes, and ſtudied contrivances of evil: and thereby purges all wickedneſs and diſobedience out of our lives and actions. It implies a change of mind, and an alteration of the life and practice. And becauſe repentance, in its whole nature, implies obedience, as its chief ingredient; and becauſe that change of mind which is the firſt branch of it, is ſo natural a principle, and ſo powerful a cauſe to work and effect it: therefore it is, and upon no other reaſon, that God in the holy ſcriptures doth ſo far encourage it. He means not in any wiſe, at the laſt day, to acquit and reward men, upon ſuch repentance, as is void of obedient works and actions; but upon ſuch only, as include or produce them.

LASTLY: The condition of our pardon and happineſs, is ſometimes in ſcripture called LOVE. Love, ſays St. Paul, is the *fulfilling of the law*. It is the great condition

16 *Obedience indispensably necessary*

tion of life, the standing terms of mercy and happiness. Now our hearty love of God and men, is a most natural principle of an intire service and obedience; and therefore it is, that God hath promised so nobly to reward it. He never intends to crown an idle and unworking love; but such only, as is active and industrious.—*If ye love me, says he, keep my commandments* *.

AND thus at last we have fully seen, that as for all those other things besides obedience, whereunto the gospel promises pardon and happiness; they are by no means available to our bliss, when they are separate from obedience; but then only, when they effect and imply it. They all aim at it, and end in it; and are of no account in God's judgment, further than they produce it. For it is not our *knowing Christ*, or our *believing Christ*, or our *being in Christ*, or our *repentance*, or *love*, or any thing else, that will save us, whilst we go on to disobey. No, at the last day we shall certainly be condemned notwithstanding them, without a faith that has wrought, and if

* John xiv. 15.

the obedience of our works is wanting. It is only such a working service, that will please our judge, and secure ourselves. Christ's gospel, whereby all of us must stand or fall in the last day, has fully declared this already; and Christ himself will then confirm it. So that it is in vain to cast about for other marks, and to seek after other evidences of our title to bliss and happiness: nothing less than our repentance and obedience will avail us unto life; and, through the merits of Christ, and the grace of his gospel, that will.

S E R M O N II.

Unfruitfulness of Sin.

[From Bishop TAYLOR's Sermons.]

ROMANS VI. 21.

What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

THE son of Sirach did prudently advise, concerning making judgments of the felicity or infelicity of men: *Judge none blessed before his death, (says he) for a man shall be known in his children.*

Some men raise their fortunes, from small beginnings, to riches, honour, and dignity; and descend into their graves in peace. And their estate continues, and devolves upon their heir: and all is well till the next generation. But if a man's

6

children

children prove vicious and unprosperous, we account him miserable, and his grave to be strewed with sorrows and dishonours.

This is a great calamity, when it falls upon innocent persons. That *Moses* died upon mount Nebo, in the sight of Canaan, was not so great an evil, as that his sons *Eliezer* and *Gerson* were unworthy to succeed him. And to *Samuel*, that his sons proved corrupt, and were set aside for their unworthiness, was an allay to his honour and his joys; and such as proclaims to all the world, that the measures of our felicity are not to be taken by the lines of our own persons, but of our relations also: and he that is cursed in his children, cannot be reckoned amongst the fortunate.

And that which may be spoken of families in general, is most remarkable in the retinue and family of *sin*. For it keeps a good house, and is full of company and servants, it is served by the possessions of the world, it is courted by the unhappy, flattered by fools, taken into the bosom by the effeminate, made the end of human

designs, and feasted all the way of its progress. Wars are made for its interest, and men give or venture their lives that their sin may be prosperous. All the outward senses are its handmaids, and the inward senses are its counsellors. Riches are its ministers, nature holds up its train, and art is its emissary to promote its interest and affairs abroad. And upon this account, all the world are subjects or friends of its kingdom, or are so kind to it as to make it frequent visits, and to lodge in its borders; because all men doat upon its pleasures, and are inticed to taste of its wanton delicacies.

But then, if we look what are the children of this splendid family, and see what issue sin produces, it may help to untie the charm. And these the apostle in my text calls by their name, *shame and death*. These are the fruits of sin. *What fruit had ye then?* that's the question. In answer to which question, we are to consider,

I. What is the sum total of the *present* pleasure of sin.

II.

II. What fruits and relishes it leaves behind by its *natural* efficiency; and,

III. What are its consequents by its demerit, and the infliction of the *superadded* wrath of God.

Of the first, St. Paul gives no account, but by way of upbraiding, asks what they had? that is, nothing that they dare to own, nothing that remains: and where is it? what is become of it? Of the second he gives the sum total; all its natural effects are *shame* and its appendages. The third, or superinduced evils by the just wrath of God, he calls *death*; the worst name in itself, and the greatest of evils that can happen. *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*

I. Let us consider, what *present* pleasures there are in sin.

Most of them are very *punishments*.—It were easy to make a catalogue of sins, every one of which is a disease and trouble, in its very constitution and nature. Such are, loathing of spiritual things, bitterness of
C 3 mind,

mind, rage, greediness, irresolution, cruelty and despite, slothfulness and distrust, slander and upbraiding, rashness and despair, effeminacy and superstition. If a man were to curse his enemy, he could not wish him a greater evil than these. And yet these are several kinds of sin which men chuse, and give all their hopes of heaven in exchange for one of these diseases.

Is it not a fearful consideration, that a man should rather chuse eternally to perish, than to say his *prayers*, heartily and affectionately? But so it is with very many men. They are driven to their devotions by custom, and shame, and reputation, and civil compliances. They are uneasy when they are called to it, or else pass the time with inattention, and dislike the employment, and suffer the torment of prayers which they love not; and all this, although for so doing, it is certain they may perish.

Again: Can any man imagine a greater evil to the body and soul of a man, than madness, and furious eyes, and a distracted look, paleness with passion, and trembling hands and knees, and folly in the heart and
head?

head? and yet this is the pleasure of anger; and for this pleasure men chuse damnation!

But it is a great truth, that there are but very few sins that *pretend* to pleasure. Although a man be weak and soon deceived, and the devil is crafty, and sin is false and impudent, and pretences are too many; yet most kinds of sins are real and original troubles to the very body, without any manner of deliciousness, even to the sensual, natural, and carnal part; and a man must love mischief only because it is a sin; for in many instances there is no other reason in the world.

And even amongst those who pretend to some pleasure, there is mingled so much trouble to bring them to an act of enjoyment, that the appetite is above half tired before it comes.

It is necessary that a man should be extremely *patient* who is *ambitious*. No man buys death and damnation at so dear a rate as he that *fights* for it, and endures cold and hunger, the dangers of war, and the snares of a crafty enemy. He lies upon the ground with a severity greater than the

penances of an hermit, and fasts beyond the austerity of a sincere penitent; with this only difference, that the one does it for Heaven, and the other for an uncertain honour, and an eternity of torment. But however, by the time that he hath obtained something, he hath spent some years, and hath not much time left him to rest in his new purchase; he hath worn out his body, and lessened his capacity of feeling it; and although it is ten to one he cannot escape all the dangers he must venture at, that he may come near his trifle; yet when he is arrived thither, he can never long enjoy, nor well perceive or taste it: and therefore there are more sorrows at the gate, than there can dwell comforts in the house, of pride and great designs.

And thus it is in *revenge*; which is pleasant only to a devil, or a man of the same cursed temper. He does a thing which ought to trouble him, and which will move him to pity what his own vile hands have acted. But if he doth not pity, that is, be troubled with himself and wish the things undone, he hath those affections by which
the

the devil doth rejoice in destroying souls; which affections a man cannot have, unless he be perfectly miserable, by being contrary to God, to mercy, and to felicity. And, after all, the pleasure is false, fantastick, and violent. It can do him no good, but it can do him hurt. It is odds but it will; for, generally, on him that takes revenge, revenge will be taken: and by a real evil, he shall dearly pay for the goods that are but airy and fantastical.

And those sins which are entertained with the greatest fondness from without, must yet needs have but little pleasure, because there is a strong faction, and the better party against them. Something that is within contests against the entertainment; and they sit heavy upon the spirit, when the man is vexed that they are not lawful. They may seem pleasant at first; but their employment is base, they are so against a man's interest, and against what is and ought to be dearest to him, that he cannot persuade his better part to consent, but must fight against them and all their arguments.

And

And this is the sum total of the pleasures which sin brings along with it.

I proceed,

Idly, To consider what fruits and relishes it leaves behind it, by its *natural* efficiency.

It is naturally productive of *ignorance*. I shall not need philosophically to consider by what connexion of causes ignorance follows sin; but this is certain,—Whether a man would fain be pleased with sin, or be quiet or fearless when he hath sinned, or continue in it, or persuade others to it, he must do it by false propositions, by lyings, and such weak discourses as none can believe but such as are born fools, or such as have made themselves so, or are made so by others.

Who in the world is a verier fool, a more ignorant wretched person, than he that is an *atheist*? A man may better believe there is no such man as himself, and that he is not in being, than that there is no God: for himself can cease to be, and once was not, and shall be changed from what he is,
and

and in very many periods of his life knows not that he is. And so it is every night with him, when he sleeps. But none of these can happen to God; and if he knows it not, he is a fool. Can any thing in this world be more foolish than to think, that all this rare fabrick of Heaven and Earth can come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster? To see rare effects, and no cause; an excellent government, and no prince; a motion without an immoveable; a circle without a center: a time without eternity; a second without a first; a thing that begins not from itself, and therefore not to perceive there is something from whence it doth begin, which must be without beginning; these things are so against philosophy and natural reason, that he must needs be a beast in his understanding who doth not assent to them: This is the atheist; *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* That's his character: The thing framed says, that nothing framed it; the tongue never made itself to speak, and yet talks
against

against him that did; saying, that which is made *is*, and that which made it *is not*.

If we consider in general, upon what blind and senseless principles the state of an evil life relies, we cannot sufficiently admire the infatuation there is in sin; such as are these: that sense is to be preferred before reason, interest before religion, sin before Heaven, moments before eternity, money above God himself; that a man's felicity consists in that which a beast enjoys; that a little in present uncertain possession is better than the certain state of infinite glories hereafter. What child, what fool, can think things more weak and more unreasonable? and yet if men do not go upon these grounds, upon what account do they sin? Sin hath no wiser reasons for itself than these. The same argument that a fly hath to enter into a candle, the same argument a fool hath that enters into sin; it looks delightful, but it scorches him to death.

Such are the principles of a sinner's philosophy. And no wiser are his hopes. All his

his hope that he hath is, that he shall have time to repent of that which he chuseth greedily; that he whom he every day provokes, will save him whether he will or no; that he can in an instant, or in a day, make amends for all the evils of forty years; or else, that he shall be saved whether he does or no: that Heaven is to be had for a sigh, or a short prayer, and yet Hell shall not be consequent to the affections, and labours, and wicked services of a whole life: He goes on, and cares not: He hopes without a promise, and refuses to believe all the threatenings of God; but believes he shall have a mercy, for which he never had a revelation. If this be knowledge or wisdom, then there is no such thing as folly in the world.

And then consider, that there are some sins, the very nature of which is a lye. Superstition could not be in the world, if men did believe God to be good and wise, just and merciful. No man would dare to do in private what he fears to do in publick, if he did know that God sees him there, and will bring that work of darkness into light.

light. But he is so foolish as to think, that if he sees nothing, nothing sees him. For if men perceive God to be present, and yet will do wickedly, their case is still more deplorable. And then they believe another lye, that to be seen by man will bring more shame than to be discerned by God; or that the shame of a few men's talk is more intolerable than to be confounded before Christ and his angels and saints, and before all the world. He that excuses a fault by telling a lye, believes it better to be guilty of two faults, than to be *thought* guilty of one. And every hypocrite thinks it not good to be holy, but that to be accounted so is a fine thing; that is, that opinion is better than reality, and that there is in virtue nothing good but the fame of it: and the man that takes revenge, relies upon this foolish proposition, that his evil that he hath already suffered, grows less if another suffers the like.

I need not add to this account the other evils of mankind, that are the events of ignorance, but introduced by sin. Such as are, our being moved by what we see strongly,

strongly, and weakly by what we *understand*; that men are moved rather by parables than by reasoning, by examples than by precepts, by seeming things than by real, by shadows than by substances; that men judge of things by their first events, and measure the events by their own short lives, or shorter observations; that they are credulous to believe what they wish, and incredulous of what makes against them, measuring truth or falsehood by measures that cannot fit them; they make general conclusions from particular instances, and take account of God's actions by the measures of a man. Men call that justice which is on their side, and all their own causes are right, and they are so always; they are so when they affirm them in their youth, and they are so when they deny them in their old age; and they are confident in all their changes; and their first error, which they now see, doth not make them more modest in the proposition which they now maintain; for they do not understand that what was, may be so again:

So

So foolish and ignorant was I, (said David) and as it were a beast before thee.

The III^d thing I propos'd to consider was, The fruits and effects of sin, not only by its natural consequence, but by the *super-added* wrath of God.

There are to some crimes such events as are not to be expected from the connexion of natural causes, but from secret influences and undiscernible conveyances. There are effects which we feel by experience, and are forewarned of by revelation, concerning which no natural reason can judge, nor can any foresight prevent, but by living innocently, and complying with the commandments of God. The rod of God, which cometh not into the lot of the righteous, strikes the sinning man with sore strokes of vengeance.

There is one thing that may be called the aggravation of the shame of sin; and that is, an impossibility of its being concealed, in most cases of heinous crimes. Let no man suppose that he shall for ever
hide

SERM. II. *Unfruitfulness of Sin.* 33

hide his sin. A crime may be conveyed under the covert of an excuse or a privacy, but it shall in time be known that it did escape, and shall be discovered that it was private, that is, that it is so no longer.

And scarce any wicked man, who dwelt and delighted in sin, did ever go off from his scene of unworthiness without an evil character. The black veil is thrown over him before his death, and by some contingency or other his stains appear. There are few sins that determine finally upon the thoughts; but if they dwell there, they will also enter into action, and then the sin discovers itself; or else the injured person will proclaim it; or the man himself will talk of it before it is done; or curious people will inquire and discover; and the spirit of detraction will be let loose upon him.

For there is no man that can be secure and quiet in his spirit from being discovered. They are not secure, even when they are safe, but are afflicted with perpetual jealousies; every whisper (they think) is concerning them; and all new noises are arrests to their spirits; the day is too light,

and the night is too horrid, and both (they imagine) are most seasonable for their discovery.

And besides the undiscernible connexion of the contingencies of providence, many secret crimes have been published by *dreams*, and talkings in their sleep: and what their understanding kept a guard upon, their fancy let loose. Fear was the bar and lock; but sleep became the key to open, even then when all their senses were shut, and God ruled alone, without the choice and discourse of man.

And though no man regards the wilder talkings of a distracted man, yet it hath sometimes happened, that a *delirium* and a fever, fear of death, and the intolerable apprehensions of damnation, have opened the cabinet of sin, and brought to light all that was acted in the curtains of the night. And there are so many ways of discovery, and amongst so many, some one doth so certainly happen, that they are well summed up in that saying, *Time bears all, and tells all.*

Many

Many persons have betrayed themselves by their own fears, and knowing themselves never to be secure enough, have gone about to clear themselves of what nobody suspected them; offered an apology, when they had no accuser but one within; which, like a thorn in the flesh, or like a word in a fool's heart, was uneasy till it came out. When men are over-busy in justifying themselves, it is a sign themselves think they need it.

Plutarch, an ancient and grave author, tells of a young gentleman that destroyed a swallow's nest, pretending to them that reproved him for doing the thing, which in the superstition of those days they deemed ominous, that the little bird accused him for having killed his father.

And to this purpose it was, that *Solomon* gave counsel: *Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, nor the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.* Murder and treason have by such strange ways been revealed, as if God had appointed an angel to preside over such matters,

and kept this in secret and sure ministration, to be as an argument to destroy atheism from the face of the earth, by opening the secrets of men with this key of providence. Intercepting of letters, mistaking names, false inscriptions, errors of messengers, faction of the parties, fear in the actors, horror in the action, restlessness of the mind, distracted looks, weariness of the spirit, and all under the conduct of the divine wisdom and the divine vengeance, make the covers of the most secret sin transparent and visible.

For besides that God takes care of the lives of men, driving away all evils from their persons; there are in the machinations of a mighty mischief so many motions to be centered, so many wheels to move regularly, and the hand that turns them doth so tremble, and there is so universal a confusion in the conduct, that unless it passeth suddenly into act, it will be prevented by discovery; and if it be acted, it enters into such a mighty horror, that the face of a man will tell what his heart did think and his hands have done.

And

And after all, it was seen and observed by him that stood behind the cloud; who shall also bring every work of darkness into light, in the day of strange discoveries and fearful recompences; and in the mean time, certain it is, that no man can long put on a person and act a part, but his evil manner will be apt to peep through the disguise, and God will bring an hypocrite to shame even in the eyes of men.

Wherefore let us keep innocency, and do the thing which is right; for it is that, and that only, which will give us security here, and bring us peace at the last.

SERMON III.

Of numbering our Days.

[From Bishop PATRICK.]

PSALM XXXIX. 5.

*Lord, let me know my end, and the number
of my days, that I may be certified how
long I have to live.*

THE psalmist doth not here intend to pray that God would teach him the precise time when he should die; but the substance of his request is this: He had observed how suddenly many younger and stronger than himself had been snatched away, oftentimes before they expected their death, or were prepared for it; “ There-
“ fore, (says he) O Lord, let me so con-
“ sider these examples of mortality, that I
“ may know that my end cannot be far off,
“ and that the number of my days cannot
“ be many; so that I had more need to
“ spend my little period in preparing for
“ my

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 39

“ my own dissolution, than in fruitlessly
“ bewailing those that are gone a while
“ before me: for thou hast given me this
“ and other instances, that I may be certi-
“ fied how near my death is, rather than
“ deceive myself in counting how long I
“ have to live, and upon the false hopes of
“ that, be seized before I am prepared.”

And truly we need no large or difficult measure to find out the length of our life, for (as the psalmist adds in the next words) *Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of thee, and verily every man living is altogether vanity*: That is to say, so very short are my days, that they are but as it were a span long, if they should last to the full term that thou hast allowed for human life; and mine age, who have already lived longer than many, is as nothing in respect of thee, O Lord, who art infinite and everlasting; it seems but a little moment to thy eternity: And verily, if I were younger or stronger, it were not too soon to begin this preparation for a change; since every man living, of what age, temper, or condition

soever he be, is altogether vanity, being liable to so many sicknesses, hurts, and dangers, at all times, and in all places, that he is no where safe, nor sure to live one minute; and therefore old and young, weak and strong, high and low, should immediately prepare themselves for death, against which they have no shelter nor security.

But notwithstanding that it is so easy to make a true estimate of our life, yet it is certain nevertheless, that most men do greatly mistake in this matter. Therefore I shall at present endeavour to remove these mistakes, and rectify our apprehensions concerning it; that so, for the future, we may learn to *number our days* aright, and be *certified how long we have to live*, that is, how near our death is to us. In order to which, I shall

FIRST shew, *How it is that we are apt to misreckon concerning our lives*; And in the

NEXT place shall shew, *How to rectify these mistakes*.

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 41

ONE kind of misreckoning is, when we reckon by *years*; whereas my text teacheth us to reckon by *days*. Thus the rich fool in the Gospel would needs reckon by *many years*; saying, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry*: He that could not truly reckon to *one* (for that night his soul was required of him) yet tells to a great number: And what a strange mistake was this, and an irrecoverable error, such as could never be amended!—But thus do men generally miscount in the days of their health; and, which is most strange, even dying men oftentimes think of nothing but recovering and living still in the world.

ANOTHER misreckoning is, we are apt to count all our days to come as *happy* ones. There is scarcely any man, but he reckons so much pleasure in such a condition, which he shortly hopes to attain; and accounts of so much joy, from every alteration and change that he shall make. He thinks that all his days, be they short or long, will be all summer and sunshine. He dreams not
of

of the *evil days*, (as the Scripture calls them) that is, the days of adversity and misery. He thinks not of a storm or a tempest; of a cloud that may cover his sky, and bring a sad darkness upon all his mirth and pleasure; and so he never provides against it, but is miserably surprized when he sees all his expectations perish. One sad accident blots his whole account, and tells him to his grief, how the whole work is wrong, wherein his thoughts have laboured.

SOME are apt to reckon by their *age*. They account, that the old must needs die before those that are young; and they reckon, that the fewer days any one hath spent, the more he hath to come: and so, few think of dying, till they think it cannot be avoided. Hence it is, that one who is old saith, I shall never live to see an end of these troubles, but you that are young will behold the conclusion; and perhaps that party drops into the grave in his youthful days. And he that is young saith, These will be fine things to talk of when we are old; our grandchildren will wonder when we

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 43

we tell them of such strange revolutions; when perhaps the next week he is sent into the place of silence. These are they that reckon by ages; and who think, when childhood is past, that youth, manhood, and grey hairs are all to come: but they forget the observation of the psalmist, *Man is like unto vanity, and his days as a shadow that passeth away.*

OTHERS reckon by their *strength*; and imagine that the fabric of their body is in so good condition, that it is able to struggle with the greatest sickness. Their rule is, that the strongest constitution will last the longest; which rule is very false and deceitful. A fever will soon weaken the strongest constitution in the world. And who knows what diseases he nourishes within him, which are ready to break out, and bring down his strength and greatness? The fairest fruit is sometimes decayed within, and the goodliest oaks do sometimes prove hollow and unsound at heart. Therefore let us not stay till the ax be laid at the root, and the stroke of some terrible disease teach us to reckon better.

ANOTHER

ANOTHER sort reckon by *the lives of others*; and yet not of *all* others neither, but of the longest livers. They hope to attain to the days of the oldest man in the neighbourhood, and think not that they may go away in the company of the youngest. It is, in truth, a strange kind of dotage that possesseth mens hearts; that though they see many cropt in their fullest beauty, yet still they think that they themselves are far off from their graves. But surely, when they think of the long lives of some, they ought in all reason to consider likewise the short lives of others, and see whether this latter will not overbalance the former account.

THESE, and many such mistakes there are, by which men misreckon concerning their lives. But it is in vain to censure and lament this folly, if we do not know how to cure it. Therefore I proceed to the

OTHER thing I proposed, which was, to shew, *how we may correct these errors*. And it is this part of the discourse which

ought

ANOTHER

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 45

ought to be useful, in the direction of our lives and practices.

FIRST of all, *let us take a general survey of all those things which may put an end to our days.* There are more enemies to life than one. Though we can tell but by ones, when we number our days; yet we may tell by twenties or hundreds, when we number those things that may conclude and put a period to our life. And let us be sure in the account, to put down more ways to the grave than from a sick bed. And above all, let us take heed of that common doctage, to think that we must die of old age; for there are fewer die of that disease, than of any other in the world.

We should reflect; that we may be suddenly snatched away, and not carried off leisurely by the steps of many days illness. Some diseases do no sooner appear, than we vanish and disappear. The enemy sometimes gives no warning, but strikes us dead at one stroke. And our sickness doth not always lay siege to our strength wherein we trust, but we are blown up as it were in a moment. Some, we see, are drowned
in

in the water, others are strangled suddenly in their own blood, and a world of contingencies and casualties there are besides.

And what serious considerations would it produce in us, if we should often think thus within ourselves,—What if now the house should fall? What if our foot should slip in such a place? What if the ship in which we should be sailing should be over-set? Or what if the horse on which we are riding should fall? Or what would become of us, if our meat should choak us, or our drink should quench our life? I say, what would become of us, if we should lose our lives by any the like accidents?—The answer is very short and plain.—If we are not well provided, we go down to hell in a moment.

Therefore let us always live well, that we may never die suddenly. Let not the mighty man glory in his strength, nor the rich man glory in his riches; since all may be cut off in a moment. But let us live under a constant persuasion, that there is a vast uncertainty of life, and of all worldly things;

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 47

things; and that death is dressed in a thousand shapes, and may be in every thing we see in the world.

IN the next place : to rectify these errors concerning our life, *let us not reckon upon more happiness than generally falls to the share of any man in this world.* We must not expect all kind usage from the world, but look to meet with much trouble and sorrow. So the author of my text tells us, that if we live till 80 years, our strength will be but labour and sorrow. And we must endure much grief before that, from the loss of our friends and relations that God takes away, besides all the vexation that will be apt to arise from other accidents.

It is a foolish flattery of ourselves, to think that all our days must be calm and serene, and that no disgust shall wrinkle our foreheads, and no black veil be cast over our faces. We had better reckon truly, and put down more uneasy than satisfied days; and if they prove better than we expect, our contentment will be the greater : and however it be, the thoughts
of

of trouble will make us desire more to be released from it, and long more in our hearts for the heavenly country. The travel and toil here, would make us be careful to provide for our rest with the people of God; and these black nights of affliction,—for the eternal day that knows no night at all.

As we shall not much fear death, if we consider how many ways we die daily; so we shall not be much in love with life, if we do truly reckon upon the evils of it. What pleasure is there in living when we are eighty years old? what contentment can we have, when we are a burden to ourselves, and perhaps to others? what joy can we feel in our hearts, when we have lost our eyes, and ears, and voice, and sleep, and are but a little distance from a clod of earth? and yet this is the time that we would fain live to, though we make our way to it through numbers of troubles and afflictions.

We should consider, that if life be long, it is but a kind of death; and nothing will comfort us then, but the hopes of another
and

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 49

and a better life. Such a decrepit thing is man, when he comes to old age, that he is but as it were a walking carcass, that is ready at every step to stumble into the grave. Yea, death is preying upon us every day; he every day takes away part from our life, and sometimes by sickness brings us to the brink of the grave, and then though we recruit again and repair our bodies, yet we do but make food for new diseases.

IN the next place: *Let us reckon our days, not by the time we have lived, but by the work we have done in it.* Let us account that the longest day, which is best spent; and that the oldest life, which is most holy. A long life is not the best, but a good life. They are the worthiest persons, and answer most the real purposes of life, who have brought the greatest benefit to the world, and made the greatest advantage of their time to the service of God and of men.

Therefore when we reckon how old we are, let us compute from that time when we began to live like christians, which the scripture calls being born again. A man

should blush to reckon forty or fifty years, when he knows not in all that time, perhaps, what he came into the world for. Let us not be twenty or forty years in learning to be sober; and for very shame let it not be said of any man, that in so many years he knew not how to pray and represent his needs to God. How many years do we expect to live, if in so many we cannot learn to mortify one sin? If in the space of fifty years we cannot get the victory over our pride and covetousness, how many must God give us to overcome all the rest of our sins? If so long experience will not teach us humility or contentedness, who can hope that we should live long enough to put on Jesus Christ, and be conformed unto all his will?

In the next place: *Let us reckon our time as it stands in order to eternity.* Let us look on it as a river running into the ocean; and account, that time itself must be accounted for. Let us so number our days, as to think they must be numbered again by God. Let us reflect that our time passeth, and yet that it remains upon
our

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 51

our account; and that as we live now, so will it fare with us to all eternity.

Let our souls therefore, which are apt to number so many days in this world, and are loth to make an end, launch out into the depths of eternity, and there spread their thoughts. Seeing they have such a mind to be telling out so many years for us, let them run into that immense ocean. In this vast eternity we must certainly live; and therefore why do we not let our thoughts be more upon eternity, than upon a few uncertain days in time?

LET us further consider, that *though our time be little, yet it is great enough for what we have to do in it.* Though our time be short, yet it is long enough to serve the real ends of living. We have time enough to do our real business, to make up our accounts, and prepare for eternity. And what can we desire more?

Indeed, if we will charge ourselves with unnecessary things, to bring about some great design, and accomplish some covetous desire, and raise our estates to such an height, we may not have time enough to execute

our purpose: But we must not therefore complain, because we ourselves are unreasonable. Life is long enough, if we know the true use of it. If we consider what we have to do, we have time enough to do it. There is time enough to moderate those worldly desires; to break off those impertinent employments; to throw away those designs; to subdue our passions; to cultivate our minds; to submit our will to God; to know the design of our Saviour's coming into the world; to work out our salvation; and make ready for his coming to judgment.

LASTLY: In order to rectify our mistakes concerning our life, let us do this also; *let us so reckon of our days now, as we shall do when we come to die.* Then, a day will appear a precious thing to us. Then will a covetous man offer all that he hath got in his whole life, for one day. Then will the voluptuous man be ready to purchase a day, at the expence of all his pleasures.

Let us therefore see and consider, what account dying men make of their time, and
take

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 53

take their reckoning as most certainly true. Though men now be lavish of their time, and spend their days in vanity ; though they give all or most to the world, and little or nothing unto God ; yet if we converse with a dying man, he will tell us, that our days are good for something else ; he will tell us of providing for our soul, and preparing it for heaven, by constant acts of godliness.

And therefore let us now judge, as men are wont to do, when they are taught by death that cannot flatter. Death is a stern master, but withal very just and faithful. He speaks with a dreadful voice, but things that are infinitely true and serious. Let us then learn of those that he teacheth, and not stay till we be taught, when perhaps we shall be past learning.

Let us for once imagine ourselves laid upon the bed of sickness, and that we feel the approaches of death coming upon us. Shall we then say, Eat, drink, and be merry ; let us take our ease, for we have goods laid up for many years ?—Shall we then reckon, that our time is long enough, and

that we need take care for nothing but to please ourselves? And why not then,—when perhaps but a very little while before, this was our language? But, alas, eternity now appears, and all these thoughts vanish.

And the advice to be given upon this matter is briefly this: let us do the same now, which perhaps we may do three days hence. Let us do that which now we can, which ere long we shall wish to do and cannot.

This may be more than an imagination before the morrow. And to be sure one day it will be a reality.

AND now, by way of application of the whole, let us pray unto God, after the example in my text, that he will teach us to know our end, and number our days aright. And let us never cease meditating thereon, till we have this fruit and effect of it, that our hearts are brought to the wisdom of the just; till we judge of things as God doth, and chuse that which he loves, and follow the thing that good is, and altogether become of the same mind with him.

Let

SERM. III. *Of numbering our Days.* 55

Let us number and pray till we find these considerations taking down the heights of pride, and the heats of lust, the huge desires of a covetous mind, and the humorous imaginations of a fond fancy; till we find them quieting our passions, moderating our affections, and bringing our wills to the measures of God; till we have found a place in another country, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; till we can live as well in poverty as in riches; in hardship, as in soft enjoyments; without distrust or envy, without fear, and without perplexity; in short, till we have learned to live the life of men, and the life of christians; till we make God our only joy, and love our neighbour as ourselves, and look death in the face as a friend.

Let us every night call ourselves to an account, and think that we have one day less to live, and one day more to reckon for. We every day make our account greater, and have less time to make it in, and therefore let us make it always as we go along.

If we reckon justly, and think it is possible we may die to-night, then how can we live otherwise than as dying men? How can we quietly lay ourselves down to sleep in our beds, with the conscience of any guilt upon our souls?

To conclude all, let us go home and reckon, if we can, how many days we have yet remaining. And if we can find never a one, for any thing that we can tell, let us not give sleep to our eyes, before we have taken up some good resolutions against the morrow, if that shall come; and then work out our salvation with fear and trembling; and every day watch and pray, because we know not at what hour the Lord will come.

S E R M O N IV.

Of common Swearing.

[From Dr. CLAGETT's Second Volume.]

MATTHEW V, 34, 35.

I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King,

I SHALL not take up your time at present with proving, that it is not every kind of oath that is here forbidden, particularly not an oath before a magistrate, which hath been instituted by the wisdom of all nations for the deciding of controversies; but, according to the instances here given, I shall speak of the custom of swearing in our common conversation, whereunto we are
not

not called by legal authority, and where the cause itself doth not require it.

I say unto you—says our Saviour: It is his own special and peculiar command. And surely, if his authority can prevail with us, to do any thing in obedience to him; it will not fail to govern us especially in this matter, where the performance of his will is so easy, and the violation of it is not rewarded by any gain or pleasure, or solicited by any temptation that can fasten upon our sensual appetites; nor can be resolved easily into any other cause, but a spirit of contradiction to the gospel of our Lord: which may make us astonished, that in an age pretending to the worship of God, in a nation formed into a christian church, so many should be found, of almost all qualities and degrees, who bid defiance to the authority of our Saviour, by refusing to make so small an acknowledgment of it, as the keeping of a law so easy as this; that we should thus put into our discourse a peculiar character to let the world know, that we are no christians, though we were baptized into the name of Christ; lest it should

should not be observed by our practices, that we should take care to discover it by our language, that we are none of those who believe Jesus to be the son of God.

If we had no other reason therefore, but the will of our Lord and Saviour to rule us in this matter; that certainly, should be enough to conclude us. He that should want a farther obligation, deserves to be ranked with heathens and infidels. And yet the thing which our Saviour here forbids, is evil in itself, and contains many foul and detestable immoralities in its own nature. And therefore the common swearer's sin, how enormous must it needs be, who refuseth to do a very small matter, to avoid so great a guilt?

THAT the heinousness thereof may farther appear, I shall first consider, *what are those dispositions that incline men to this practice:*

And then, shall examine *those pretences that are usually alleged in excuse of it.*

Now if men are led to it by no good principles; if the *dispositions* thereunto are wholly

wholly evil; if evil be implied in the very *pretences* brought to excuse it: nothing can be farther needful to prove its immorality.

THE true principles and causes inclining men to this practice, are these:

1. Want of reverence towards God.
2. Carelessness of avoiding the crime of perjury.
3. Immodesty and pride.
4. Lightness and vanity of mind.

And indeed there must be all these things together, to make up a common sweareſ: For if he either had reverent thoughts of God; or feared to be forsworn; or if he had but a little modesty and good manners; or any tolerable measure of a steady and serious spirit; any one of these things would secure him.

1. I SAY, customary swearing betrays *great irreverence towards God*. For unless a man had very mean and dishonourable thoughts of God, how durst he make so bold with him, as to affirm nothing so silly, and transact nothing so trivial and mean,

mean, but he must summon God to be his witness? reverence of the Deity is always expressed, by separating holy things from vile and common uses. And because an oath is an appeal to the knowledge and justice of God; it is greater rudeness to press it to unnecessary services, than it would be for the meanest of people to call the king out of his throne, to hear every idle tale they brought against one another. If an oath be an holy thing, let us use it as we do those holy places, which we do not put to all employments, but reserve them for their peculiar use.

2. It argues a man *not to fear that horrid crime of perjury*; for if he were afraid of it, how cautious and deliberate would he be before he ventured to affirm any thing upon oath? he would consider whether it were exactly true; whether it were certain, or only probable; whether he was not liable to mistake or misinformation in the case; and many other things, which are often necessary to come under consideration, with the man that trembles at the thought

thought of perjury. But it is most evident, that common swearers trouble themselves with none of these thoughts. What they say at a venture they boldly swear: what they rashly utter, they as rashly add oaths and curses to. Their habit of swearing makes them not one jot the more wary in their talk; and the slipperiness of their tongues not at all the more afraid of an oath, which is a plain argument that they have little apprehension of perjury, and are not afraid to be forsworn. For, I say, did we ever find, that those who are given to swearing, are more deliberate and slow to speak than other men? Do they weigh their words with more exactness? Do they refrain from looseness of conversation, more than those who are content to speak upon their honest word? No; but, on the contrary, they are usually more free and prodigal of their discourse; their words are guided with less consideration and judgment; and their tongues hang more loosely in their heads than is observable in other men. Nay, it is well known, that they are then most plentiful of their oaths, when
they

they are least able to govern their discourse with discretion, that is, when they are intoxicated either with liquor or passion. And what numerous perjuries then, in all likelihood, are these men guilty of? Nay, it is not improbable, but some of them may be forsworn every day they rise. For though men may please themselves with thinking that they do but swear in jest, yet the obligation of an oath is not to be laughed away. When men swear they will do this and that, which it may be they intend not at all; or that such a thing is true, which they know is false; they are nevertheless guilty of perjury, for not minding that they are so: since a sin ceaseth not to be what it is, merely by the stupidity of a man's conscience. But all that can be said in this case is, that they are not apprehensive of the guilt, nor afraid of the crime of perjury.

3. NEEDLESS swearing argues *immodesty and pride*. Few things are more unseemly in a man, than to affirm every thing with confidence, and to be peremptory in all his discourse;

discourse; for this is to impose upon his company, and leave no room for any body to be of another mind. And such companions are shunned by all wise persons, as being void of that modesty and sobriety, which make men sociable and conversable. But what shall we say to those who are not only positive and dogmatical in their common discourse, but assert every thing almost which they say upon oath? Certainly, in this kind of behaviour, there is as much ill manners towards men, as there is rudeness towards God. For what greater instance can there be given of an impertinent and peremptory temper, than to seal our discourse with oaths, and leave no room for another to doubt of what we say, under the pain of accusing us of perjury?

A modest and wise man, when he delivers his judgment in many things, where possibly he might, without fear of being accused of arrogance, be peremptory and conclusive, yet chuseth to declare himself with that reservedness, which may invite another man to shew all his reasons to the contrary, without fear of displeasing him;
and

and this we all know is a great ornament to any man's conversation, and of excellent use to maintain peace and good-will and good correspondence in all societies: but light is not more contrary to darknes, than the custom of swearing is to this humane and gentle temper: therefore it betrays immodesty and arrogance.

4. It proceeds also from great *vanity and lightness of spirit*. It is an argument of great vanity, to make no difference between matters of serious importance and consideration, and such as are frivolous and of little consequence. And this is that which the swearer is apparently chargeable with: for otherwise, how could he, in the same light humour, wherein he is delivering something to make the company laugh, presume to profane so sacred a thing as an oath is, by accompanying a poor silly jest with it: as if the taking of an oath required no more seriousness than is necessary to the telling of a tale?

It is also a great argument of vanity, to take more pains for the confirming of what

we say, than the thing doth at all deserve. It is plain, that the greatest part of our conversation with one another, by discourse and correspondence, doth not require any solemn confirmation of the truth of our words, much less the testimony of an oath; which being the greatest security we can give, he must be a very light-headed companion that will throw it away at every turn; who cannot tell what was done yesterday, or make a promise to his friend or acquaintance about the ordinaryest matter, but out comes an oath, or a curse, to bind his words withal.

It is easy to convince any man of ordinary sense, that there is that levity and madness implied in this custom, which, if it were but seen in other things, would bring a man under the reputation of an idiot. For suppose a man were to make a promise to his friend, of that kind which frequently happens in our conversation; as that he would give him a visit, or a meeting where he should appoint; but for the present, would not suffer him to go, till he had gotten an hundred of his neighbours together,

SERM. IV. *Of common Swearing.* 67

to be witnesses of his promise; what a ridiculous fancy would this be? for nothing is more plain, than that the ordinary assurance of a man's word is sufficient for these matters, and will either pass for them, or he had as good be banished out of human society, or sent to some other place at least, where being not so well known, he may be the better trusted. But it is as clear as when the sun shines, that he who will not make such a promise without an oath, nor let his word go without calling God to witness it, by invoking his justice and vengeance if he falsifies, (for that is the meaning of an oath) he doth really ten thousand times more to confirm his promise, than if he had summoned town and country together, than if he had gotten all mankind, nay, and all the angels in Heaven together, to be witnesses between him and his neighbour. There cannot certainly be a more ridiculous vanity thought of than this, to give away the best security we can afford of our fidelity upon every trifling occasion.

THUS have I shewn what those evil principles are, from whence swearing in

our common conversation proceeds. It comes of irreverence towards God, carelessness of being forsworn, immodesty and arrogance, lightness and vanity of spirit; that is to say, If a man hath either the fear of God, or a detestation of perjury, or modesty and good manners, or any sobriety and seriousness; any one of these things will be sufficient to keep him from using needless oaths: and therefore the common swearer is destitute of them all.

I come now, in the next place, to examine the pretences which are usually alleged in the *excuse*, or for the mitigation of this crime.

Indeed, no excuse ought to be heard for that man who goes on in any known sin; much less in his behalf, who lives in the violation of so plain and easy a law as this which forbids common swearing. But because there are many given to this sin, who are ready to excuse themselves presently when they are admonished, and to ask your pardon, if you seem to be offended and grieved, and then think that they have given you reasonable satisfaction, as they hope they have done the like to God, by confessing

SERM. IV. *Of common Swearing.* 69

confessing that truly they ought not to swear in this fashion, and God forgive them for it, but yet they go on still to do the same thing; one would think there were some notable temptation to this sin, which would go very far to extenuate the guilt of it, and which rendered the avoiding of it so very difficult, that all the regard which could reasonably be expected to be given to that law of God which forbids it, is to confess our fault, and cry God's mercy every time we commit it; and that a good-natured man ought to be very well satisfied with the acknowledgment.

I have already shewn that this is a sin which stands in need of an excuse as much as any: I shall now shew, that there is none less capable of an excuse; by examining what is usually pretended for it.

I never heard that any swearer ever fancied his oaths to be for his health, or his wealth; that they prolong his life, or increase his estate; that they give the liquor a brisker flavour, or bring the gamester any good luck; that they ease him of his pains, or set off his pleasures. I suppose you are

all sensible that these pretences would be ridiculous: and truly they are not much better that follow: As,

FIRST of all, That they are an *ornament* to a man's discourse; that they set off his language; and if they are well placed, they make a sentence run the better. It would be a shame to mention this excuse, but that it seems to go a great way with some people.

Now this very excuse betrays fantasticalness and pride, and comes of a foolish affectation to be counted a wit, which every body almost knows to be an argument of a mean and degenerate spirit. The reason why at any time oaths and profane language are affected for this purpose is, because they are sometimes observed to surprize the hearers; which makes the profane person conceit that his wit is acknowledged, when in truth it is only the extravagance and boldness of his discourse that is wondered at. Folly, that is something out of the road, is more commonly apt to provoke laughter, than a surprizal that is truly ingenious.

And

SERM. IV. *Of common Swearing.* 71

And therefore for a man to have an opinion of himself, merely because he is able to make the company stare upon him, ariseth from nothing but a mixture of pride and ignorance.

As to this particular matter of swearing, it is plain that an oath signifies only to the affirming or denying of what is said, but adds nothing to the weight of the sense, or to the style wherein it is expressed. It may startle a modest man, but it cannot please any wise man; because it neither mends the matter, nor helps the expression.

But is it not strange, that *that* should go for wit, which the very basest of the people can make use of with as much freedom and discretion, and with as good a grace, as a man of the best quality and breeding can do? For the truth is, there is nothing required to this kind of pleasantness, but to get one's forehead furnished with impudence; which if the meanest clown be capable of, he is then qualified for a good companion, merely by having a memory large enough to take in half a dozen oaths,

and a tongue in his head to use them as occasion serves; which, experience shews, may be done, without any natural sagacity, or rules of art.

SECONDLY, It is sometimes pretended by common swearers, that *men will not believe them without an oath.* And what is this but to confess, they have been so notoriously given to lying, that no body dares to trust them upon their bare word? For a man that is known to make conscience of speaking the truth, finds no difficulty of creating a belief of what he says amongst any of his friends, without making any appeal to God.

Besides, the oath of a common swearer gives indeed but very little assurance of the truth of what he says. If we know a man to be afraid of an oath, his oath will satisfy us beyond any other testimony that he can give: but what regard can reasonably be had to his oath, above his simple and bare word, who is known to swear upon all occasions? If he doth not lye, it is well; but
of

of this we can have no peculiar assurance by his oath, because it is as ordinary with him to swear, as it is to speak,

THIRDLY, Another excuse framed for the extenuation of this impiety, is that of *sudden passion*. Thus when some people are a little provoked, or when they are surprized with some unexpected good fortune, or any unlooked-for misadventure befalls them, either their rage or their joy bursts out presently into oaths, and they pretend they cannot help it; for they have no other way to discharge their minds and give vent to their passions, but by cursing and swearing.

Now is not this a plain confession that they have lost the government of themselves, and have no rule over their own spirits? So common it is for men, while they are framing an excuse for one sin, to betray themselves guilty of another. What greater argument can easily be given of a weak mind, than that every petty accident is able to bereave one of all consideration,
and

and make him cease to be himself till the fit is over?

FOURTHLY, Another excuse for this is *custom*, or the compliance with other men who are our friends and companions. This pretence indeed carries a shew of civility and kind nature; but for all that, is the silliest thing that can readily be thought of, and the making of it argues a mean and degenerate mind. For although in things of an innocent and indifferent nature, it is commendable for men to remit of their own way and humour, and to suit themselves to the customs and manners of those whom they converse with; yet to be complaisant in all things without exception, is the way to grow as profligate and vile as the devil would wish any man to be: for what wickedness could want authority, if this pretence were once admitted? What is this but to proclaim, that a man hath lost all sense of difference between good and evil; and that he hath left off to judge of things according to their own nature; that
he

SERM. IV. *Of common Swearing.* 75

he hath no more use left for his reason; that his conscience is no longer in his own keeping; and that he is now fit to herd with the beasts, that follow the foremost without discretion.

LASTLY, The common way of excusing rash oaths, by pleading an *habit*, implies the greatest evil of this nature that can be. For this is but to confess, that a man is guilty of this sin in the highest degree; an evil custom being the height of wickedness.

THUS, both by shewing what those dispositions are which lead to common swearing, and by considering the excuses that are usually framed in the behalf of it, I think enough hath been said to convince us of its unreasonableness and immorality.

AND may the God of mercy grant that we may walk before him blameless, and be holy in all manner of conversation, as becomes the followers of Christ; To whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be ascribed all honour, praise, and glory, now and for ever.

SERMON V.

Proofs and Instances of a Divine Providence,

[From Dr. OWTRAM.]

ACTS XVII. 28.

In him we live, and move, and have our being.

THESE words conduct our meditations to the consideration of the Divine Providence, and of his intimate presence with us; of his care over us, and his concern for our welfare and happiness,

And it is this which I propose to make the subject of my present discourse. In which I purpose to shew the proofs and instances which we have of a superintending Providence,

AND, FIRST, This is argued from the nature of God. And therein we see it in its

its *cause*; by considering God as the great creator. I shall afterwards consider it in its *effect*; or in the works which he hath made.

The notion which we have of God is, that he is a being infinitely perfect; and what is a being infinitely perfect, but a being infinitely wise, infinitely good, and infinitely powerful? and where there is infinite *wisdom*, *power*, and *goodness*, it cannot be imagined, but that there must be a providence also.

Infinite *wisdom* cannot but see all things, otherwise it would not be infinite. Infinite *goodness*, most certainly, will not forbear to interpose, otherwise it would not be goodness. Goodness is always communicative of itself; and therefore cannot be supposed, having made the world, to sit still and not concern itself in it; especially considering, that there is infinite power ready at hand, to execute what infinite wisdom shall contrive, and what equal goodness shall chuse.

No wise man ever bestowed his pains, and employed his care, and laid out treasure, to make an house, and then presently
left

left that house, without any farther regard or notice. Much less can it be supposed, that God made the world, and then presently deserted it, after it was made;—that he left those things to be governed by chance, that he had made by wisdom.

No wise and gracious father is ever unconcerned in the lives, actions, and affairs of his children; and how should the common father of the world, from whom mortal fathers derive their inclinations, be unconcerned in the ordering and government of his creation in the world; especially considering, that God's wisdom is never weary with seeing, nor his power and goodness tired out with any employment. It is no trouble to divine wisdom to have an eye to every affair; no burden to his power to order what he sees; nothing tedious to his goodness, thus to employ his wisdom and power: for nothing is weary but that which is weak; and nothing of God being weak, nothing of him possibly can be weary neither.

HAVING thus far looked back, and beheld divine providence in the *cause*; let us
turn

turn our eyes now forward, and behold it in the *effects*: having seen it in *God*, let us now view it in the *world*.

He hath written his name, as it were, upon every creature, and printed the footsteps of his wisdom in all orders of things, in all actions and effects, from the top to the bottom of the creation.

And that we may proceed in some order, let us first take a view of things *inanimate*. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork. What can be so plain, and so perspicuous, when we see the heavens, as that there is some noble mind that rules all these things. Look upon the heaven itself, and the light of the sun is not more visible, than the eye of Providence in that light.

Behold the vicissitudes of night and day; of day to work, and of night to rest in; night for the wild beast, and day for man, to provide his sustenance. These things do shew so much of the wisdom of God, that the psalmist makes a stand upon this contemplation, and breaks out into admiration whilst he thus contemplates: *Man goeth forth*

forth unto his work, and unto his labour until the evening: O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

Behold the increase and decrease of the year imparts a proportionable measure of light, and heat, and influence, to all parts of the earth. The approach and further departure of the sun, the changes of Winter and Summer, Spring and Autumn, give unto men seed-time and harvest, corn and wine in due season. The Autumn or Spring gives us opportunity to sow our seed, and the Winter moistens the earth, that it affordeth nourishment to what is sown. The Spring opens the womb of Nature, and by gentle beams gives life to the seed that was dead, and clothes it with a new vesture, and then the Summer fills the ear with corn, and ripens that fulness for the sickle; so that we sow, and reap, and gather into barns; we eat, and drink, and make merry, and rejoice in our portion, by the providence and blessing of God upon us.

From the *heavens*, let us descend unto the *air*; and behold it is a thin and transpa-

rent

rent body, to transmit the light of the sun unto us; and in which our life and breath consists, and which is necessary for our continual support and refreshment.

From the *air*, let us dive into the *waters*; and behold the common receptacle of them, to wit, the sea. This is the universal treasure and fountain of moisture; it is the great storehouse of fish; and all its shores, one way or other, are very useful. It is serviceable also for navigation, and for speedy traffic and negociation, through all parts of the world.

And as for the *earth*:—The *mountains* are the chambers of the springs; and the *valleys* drink the waters, and grow rich by them. The earth is made firm for our feet; and is fraught, within and without, with all things needful and convenient, both for man and beast. The quarries of stone are useful to build us houses to dwell in upon the earth. And the woods of the forest do furnish ships to move at sea. The mines of gold and silver make rich and honourable, and are the common mean of intercourse and traffic throughout the

world. Iron, steel, lead, tin, and whatever else is dug out of the bowels of the earth, are all useful in many numberless respects.

From *inanimate* things, let us ascend to things endowed with *vegetable* life.—There is not an herb in the field, nor a shrub in the wood, nor a flower in the garden, nor a single blade of grass, but is useful either for food, or for medicine, or for both.

Then let us ascend still higher, unto the nature of *animals*. If we turn our eyes upon those creatures which are endowed with *sensitive* life, we can no where fix, but we every where find much of God; so that we rather see *God* in every creature, than the creature in itself. Their sexes, their generation, their birth, their shape, their life, their instincts, their inclinations and aversions, do all so effectually conspire for their own good, and for the use of men, and *that* without their own wisdom and contrivance,—that it is evident and clear, that there is a superior Providence, which teaches the fowls of the air to build their nests in high or hidden places, to lay their eggs, to hatch

hatch their young, and to feed them when they are hatched;—that there is a superior Providence, that formed every creature for its own safety; that arms the lion with teeth, and the ox with horns, and the horse with hoofs, and gives the bird a wing to fly away, and swiftness to creatures that have not strength to defend themselves;—that there is a superior providence, that fits *man* to govern all things, who serves himself of every creature, and which doth itself more especially govern man.

And thus, in the ordinary and natural works of God, we may clearly behold the characters of the Divine Providence. In the next place, let us turn ourselves to those that are *miraculous* and extraordinary; and there we shall behold the same impressions.

Now *miracles* being those effects which are done in the world, above and contrary to the power of nature,—do clearly prove, that there are in the world wisdom and power supernatural, that is, the wisdom and power of God, which is here called Providence.

What abundance of the wisdom and power of God was there, in the *bringing of the Jews out of Egypt*; in the events that came upon them in the wilderness; and afterwards, in their own land? He that had seen the plagues of Egypt, the swarms of lice, the armies of frogs, the legions of caterpillars, the storms of fire and hail, the first-born of Egypt all die in a night, and heard the living cry and groan for the dead, and all the sad circumstances of the story, must in every particular have seen the hand of Providence.

He that had seen the Red Sea divide itself, and the waters rear up into walls, to make a way for the Jews, and those walls to fall down again to overwhelm the Egyptians, must have denied the sight of his eyes, if he did not acknowledge the Providence of God.

He that had seen waters gush out of a rock, and flints melt into a flowing spring, and *that* by the touch only of Aaron's rod, must needs have acknowledged the immediate hand of God.

He that had seen the light, and heard the thunder, and smelt the smoke, and felt the shaking of mount Sinai, and seen the face of Moses, descending from the mount, gilded with light, could not have put off the consideration of a Providence, without putting off human nature also.

And thus also, to pass from the *law* to the *gospel*:—He that shall consider, that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, acted as great miracles in his life as was acted at his birth, lived without sin, died as he lived, rose again after death, ascended in a visible glory unto Heaven after his resurrection, and gave his spirit to the apostles to do miracles as he had done, after his ascension,—and all this, to confirm a law, that bids us obey, and we shall be saved, but if we disobey, we shall be damned; that is, to confirm a law that tells us there is a Providence, and *that* over the fowls of the air, and over the lilies of the field, and yet doth not at the same time acknowledge this Providence, must be strangely blind and infatuated.

Moreover; as *miracles*,—so also the fulfilling of *prophecies* is amongst those extraordinary effects that demonstrate a Providence; and these are as numerous in instances, as they are certain in proof, that such a Providence there is. For where God foretells, he concerns his wisdom and his care; and where he permits or effects what is foretold, he concerns his power and authority; and where God's wisdom, care, power, and authority, are concerned, *there* is providence to the highest measures and degrees.

Now the fulfilling of prophecies is a thing most remarkable in holy scripture, wherein the providence of God hath been very exact.

Thus, the Jews are sent down into Egypt by the Providence of God, and by the same Providence they are delivered out of Egypt, the self-same day that *that* deliverance was foretold: as we read in the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus.

In the twenty-first chapter of the first book of Kings; in the portion of Jezreel, did

did the dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and this was done, that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he spake by Elisha, the Tishbite.

In the twenty-third chapter of the second book of Kings, Josiah took the bones of the priests, and burnt them upon the altar at Bethel, and polluted it; and by thus doing, fulfilled a prophecy fixed upon Josiah by name, (though long before Josiah was born) which had thus cried, O Altar, Altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

In the twenty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, seventy years captivity was determined upon the Jews; after which time, God had promised that Cyrus, by name, should set the captives at liberty, and this long before Cyrus was born: which time being come, the same Cyrus released the same captivity; and *that* to fulfil the word of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah the prophet.

Thus, to proceed again from the *law* to the *gospel*:—The gospel hath fulfilled the law. Moses is unveiled in Christ; for in and by him are all the promises made good, all the prophecies fulfilled, all the types of the law expressed, all the shadows uncovered, all its mysteries revealed, all its darkneses unfolded; so that the times of Christ are peculiarly called the *fulness of time*, because his days were most signal times of fulfilling of prophecies.

He is the priest whom those priests typified. His death is that sacrifice which those sacrifices shadowed. He is now entered into the holy of holies, whereof *that* holy of holies was but a type: and he now really makes that expiation, which the offerings and intercessions of those priests did but typify.—And thus you see the Providence of God, striking through all the parts of the universe, in the works of nature and of grace; and passing through all times and seasons, in works supernatural and miraculous.

LET us, in the next place, observe some of those *common histories of Providence*, which

which in all times and ages present themselves unto us.

There is not a day goes over our heads, but we see some rays of divine providence, some traces of his wisdom, presenting themselves unto us. Either a wicked man is punished, or a good man is rewarded, or if he be afflicted, that affliction worketh for good. We have occasion either to admire the wisdom, or reverence the justice, or embrace the goodness of God; who every where, and at all times, is present with us, and reads a lecture of his Providence unto us.

Remarkable is that passage in holy Scripture, wherein the Jews cursed themselves by the blood of Christ (by which blood we are saved): *His blood* (say they) *be upon us and our children.* And behold, there is no nation under Heaven so much under the characters of displeased Providence, under the avengement of angry zeal, as that nation is; a nation without a country, a people without a head, citizens without a city, every where despised, every where hated, every where oppressed, every where de-
spitefully

spitefully used and trampled upon. Behold Jerusalem in heaps, the Israelites cut off from the stock of Israel, the seed of Abraham without the land to him promised, and Jacob's flock without the promise and rewards of Jacob.

No nation under Heaven without a leader but they; no people so scattered, so destroyed, so oppressed, so cursed: and why they thus, rather than others? this people, rather than any other people in the world? but to write the displeasure of God's Providence, and to brand them with the characters of his wrath, and to paint his anger upon their very foreheads, in that innocent blood which they shed. And now behold, after so many hundred years, and so many thousand prayers and expectations, they have been heard by God in no one prayer, but in that which was a curse upon themselves, *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.*

What shall we say, when we hear that *Haman* was hanged upon that tree which he had reared up for *Mordecai*?

What shall we say, when we are assured, that *Pilate*, who shed Christ's blood to gratify

tify the Jews, was, upon the accusation of the Jews, recalled by the Roman emperor, censured, deprived, banished, and in that banishment killed himself?

It would be endless to recite all the instances of this kind which occur in history, which clearly prove unto us that there is a Providence in the world; and which shew, that we are never without God; that he is near us, and is always present with us; that *in him we live, and move, and have our being.*

It is no wonder then, that we must give an account of all we do in the world; for the world is, as it were, the temple of God; and we stand always in his great presence.

Therefore, (by way of application of what hath been said)—Why are we heedless in our work? Why are we negligent in our station? Do we not know who placed us in that station; and to what end we were there placed? Let us remember that God hath set us where we are, hath given us an employment in the world, and stands by us himself:

himself: therefore let us mind our business, and be careful what we do. Let no day find us idle; let no moment find us useless.

God doth not cause the sun to rise in vain; he doth not lend us the light of the world, and length of days, and the day of grace, to no purpose.

Let us then arise and be doing; for God is with us. Let us improve every talent of grace, use every moment of time, serve every good end, give ourselves an account at night what we have done the day before, and consider in the morning what we are to do the day following.

Let us set ourselves a continual task, and give ourselves daily employment. God himself, who is infinite rest unto himself, who needeth not the world, nor any thing in it, yet is daily at work amongst men: And how much doth it concern us, who have much work to do, to see ourselves well employed?

A small insect, the most inconsiderable part of the creation of God, will struggle hard to preserve the life it hath. Many of the creatures below us will take pains, and drudge,

drudge, and toil, to sustain a short perishing life; how much more ought *man* to make haste and bestir himself, who hath a soul to save?

God hath made us after his own image; he hath created us but a little lower than the angels; he hath given us a reasonable mind, an extensive understanding, and an immortal soul. For us Christ died; for us the gospel is preached; and for our sakes the ministry of reconciliation is offered: for us doth Christ rule in Heaven; for us doth he intercede at the throne of grace; and for our sakes especially doth Divine Providence concern itself in the world.—Let us take heed, therefore, how we behave ourselves, and be sure to do well for God and for our own souls.

S E R M O N VI.

The Testimony of Conscience.

[From Dr. South's Second Volume.]

I JOHN III. 21.

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then
have we confidence towards God.*

AS nothing can be of more moment,
so few things (doubtless) are of more
difficulty, than for men to be rationally sa-
tisfied about the estate of their souls, with
reference to God, and the great concerns of
eternity.

In their judgments about which, if they
err finally, it is like a man's missing his
cast, when he throws for his life. His
being, his happiness, and all that he doth
or can enjoy in the world, is involved in
that one single event.

And therefore it may very well deserve
our best skill and care, to inquire into those
rules,

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 95

rules, by which we may guide our judgment in so weighty an affair, both with safety and success.

And this, I think, cannot be better done, than by separating the false and fallacious, from the true and certain. For, if the rule we judge by be uncertain, it is odds but we shall judge wrong: and, if we should judge right, yet it is not properly skill, but chance; not a true judgment, but a lucky accident: Which certainly, the eternal interests of an immortal soul are of much too high a value, to be left at the mercy of.

Now he who would pass such a judgment upon his condition, as shall be ratified in Heaven, and confirmed at that great tribunal, from which there lies no appeal, must proceed according to the measures which, the apostle here prescribeth, that is, from the dictates of his own heart or conscience. *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* A man's own heart, or conscience, is that, which above all other things, is able to give him *confidence towards God.* And the
reason

reason is, because the heart knows that by itself, which nothing in the world besides can give it any knowlege of; and without the knowlege of which, it can have no foundation to build any true confidence upon.

Conscience, under God, is the only competent judge of what the soul hath done, and what it hath not done; what guilt it hath contracted, and what it hath not. Thus the apostle says, *What man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him?* Conscience is its own counsellor, the sole master of its own secrets; and it is the privilege of our nature, that every man should keep the key of his own breast.

Now for the farther prosecution of the words, I shall do these four things:

I. I shall shew, how the heart or conscience ought to be *informed*, in order to its founding in us a rational confidence towards God.

II. I shall shew, *how and by what means* we may get it thus informed, and afterwards preserve and keep it so.

III.

III. I shall shew, *whence it is* that the testimony of conscience thus informed, comes to be so authentic, and so much to be relied upon. And,

IV. I shall assign some *particular cases or instances*, in which the confidence suggested by it, doth most eminently shew and exert itself.

I. I AM to shew, how the heart or conscience ought to be *informed*, in order to its founding in us a rational confidence towards God.

It is certain, that no man can have any such confidence towards God, only because his heart deceives him; and that it may do so, is altogether as certain. For there is an erroneous, as well as a rightly informed conscience; and if the conscience happens to be deluded, and thereupon to give us false directions, so that we are thereby betrayed into sin,—sin doth not therefore cease to be sin, because a man committed it conscientiously. If conscience comes to be perverted so far, as to bring a man under a persuasion, that it is lawful for him to

commit a known sin ; this will not absolve him before God : since error, which is in itself evil, can never make another thing good. He who doth an unwarrantable action, through a false information, which information he ought not to have believed ; cannot in reason make the guilt of one sin, the excuse of another.

Conscience therefore must be rightly *informed*, before the testimony of it can be authentic, in what it pronounces concerning the estate of the soul. It must proceed by the two grand rules of *reason* and *scripture* ; these are the compass which it must steer by. For conscience obligeth us, only as it is the messenger of God's will to mankind ; which he hath revealed unto us, partly by the impressions of *reason* upon our understanding, and partly by the voice of holy scripture.

So far therefore as conscience reports any thing agreeable to, or deducible from these, it is to be hearkened to, as the great conveyer of truth to the soul ; but when it reports any thing disagreeable to these, it is to be disregarded, as not having taken care to be rightly informed.

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 99

It is indeed not necessary for a man, to be assured of the rightness of his conscience, by such an *infallible* certainty of persuasion, as amounts to the clearness of a demonstration; but it is sufficient in this case, if he knows it upon grounds of such a convincing probability, as shall exclude all rational grounds of doubting of it. The confidence here mentioned, amounts to no more, than a rational, well grounded hope; such an one, as the apostle tells us, *maketh not ashamed.*

And upon these terms, I say; that such a conscience, as hath employed the utmost of its ability to give itself the best information, and clearest knowlege of its duty, that it can, is a rational ground of *confidence towards God.*

And so I pass on to the

II^d THING proposed; which is, to shew, *how, and by what means,* we may get our heart or conscience thus informed, and afterwards preserve and keep it so.

And this will be easily done, from what hath been already observed.

H 2

That

That is, to say, in the first place, let a man carefully attend to the voice of his *reason*; so as by no means to do any thing contrary to it. For though reason is not to be relied upon, as a guide universally sufficient to direct us what to do; yet it is generally to be relied upon, and obeyed, where it tells us what we *not* to do.

It is indeed but a weak and diminutive light, compared to revelation; but as weak and small as it is, it is still a light and a direction. And every man brings such a degree of this light into the world with him, that though it cannot alone bring him to heaven, yet if he be true to it, it will carry him a great way; indeed so far, that if he follows it faithfully, he shall meet with another light, that is, the light of holy scripture, which will carry him quite through.

But because, after all, the light of reason is in many things defective and dim; therefore, above all things, let a man attend to the mind of God revealed in holy *scripture*: Which exhibits to us a plain, sure, perfect, and infallible rule.

And

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 101

And therefore we see, what mighty things are spoken of the written word of God, by the inspired penmen, both of the old and new testament. Holy *David* says, *it giveth light and understanding unto the simple.* St. *Paul* says, *it is able to make the man of God perfect.* The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* says, *it is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Wherefore, since the light and efficacy of the written word is so mighty, let a man bring and hold his conscience to this steady rule; the unalterable perfection whereof, will infallibly discover the propriety or imperfection of whatsoever it is applied to. We shall find it a rule, both to instruct us what to do, and to assure us in what we have done. For although reason ought to be listened to; yet it is revelation alone that is to be relied on.

There is not any one action which a man ought to do, or to forbear, but the scripture will give him a clear precept, or prohibition for it.

So that if a man will commit such rules to his memory, and stock his mind with the precepts of holy scripture, answerable to all the heads of duty and practice; his conscience can never be at a loss, either for a direction of his actions, or an answer to a temptation.

Let a man consider and recount with himself, the several duties and virtues of a christian; such as temperance, meekness, charity, patience, purity of heart, pardoning of enemies; together with the sins and vices contrary thereunto: and then, as out of a full armory or magazine, let him furnish his conscience with passages of holy scripture, particularly enjoining the one, and forbidding, or threatening the other. And a conscience thus supplied, will be like a man armed at all points; ready to oppose, or repel the adversary.

And so I proceed to the

III^d THING I proposed, which was to shew, whence it is, that the testimony of conscience (concerning a man's spiritual estate) comes to be so authentic, and so much to be relied on.

Now

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 103

Now the force and credit of its testimony stands upon this ground ; namely, the high office which it holds immediately from God himself in the soul of man.

It is no less than God's vicegerent ; doing all things by immediate commission from him. It commands and dictates every thing in God's name ; and stamps every word with an Almighty authority. So that it is (as it were) a kind of copy or transcript of the divine sentence, and an interpreter of the sense of heaven. And from hence it is, that sins against conscience (as all sins against light and conviction are, by way of eminence, so called) are of so peculiar and transcendent a guilt. For every such sin is a daring and direct defiance of the divine authority, as it is signified and reported to a man by his conscience, and thereby ultimately terminates in God himself.

And this sovereignty of conscience is controulable by no mortal power upon earth. For not the greatest monarch in the world can countermand conscience so far, as to make it condemn, where it would other-

wise acquit ; or acquit, where it would otherwise condemn.

And were it not for this awful and majestic character which it bears, whence could it be, that the stoutest and bravest hearts droop and sneak when conscience frowns ; and the most abject and afflicted wretch feels an unspeakable, and even triumphant joy, when the judge within absolves and applauds him ? When a man hath done any villanous act, though under the countenance of the highest place and power, and under covert of the closest secrecy ; his conscience for all that strikes him like a clap of thunder, and depresseth him to a perpetual trembling, horror, and poorness of spirit. And all this, because he hath heard a condemning sentence from within, which the secret forebodings of his mind tell him will be ratified by a sad and certain execution from God. On the other side, what makes a man so cheerful, so bright and confident in his comforts ; but because he finds himself acquitted, by this same judge within him.

And

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 105

And one thing which enables conscience to judge so truly of our spiritual estate, is, the *quickness of its sight*; in spying out every thing, which can any way concern the estate of the soul. As the voice of it is loud as thunder, so the sight of it is as piercing and quick as lightning. It presently sees the guilt, and looks through all the flaws and blemishes of a sinful action; and on the other side, observes the uprightness of a man's very principles, the sincerity of his intentions, and the whole carriage of every circumstance in a virtuous performance.

Upon which account it is, that there is no such thing as perfect secrecy, to encourage a rational mind to the committing of any base action. For a man must first extinguish and put out the great light within him, his conscience;—he must get away from himself, and shake off the thousand witnesses, which he always carries about him, before he can be alone. And where there is no solitude, there can be no secrecy,

Another property of conscience, which makes the verdict of it so authentic, is, its
great

1. 6 *The Testimony of Conscience.*

great and rigorous *impartiality*. For, as its wonderful quick-sightedness makes that it cannot easily be deceived; so this makes that it will by no means deceive. A judge may be skilful in understanding a cause, and yet partial in giving sentence. But it is much otherwise with conscience. No artifice can induce it to accuse the innocent, or to absolve the guilty.

What pitiful things are power, eloquence, or riches, when they would terrify, dissuade, or buy off conscience, from pronouncing sentence, according to the merit of a man's actions! For conscience is a copy of the divine law, which is always impartial and inflexible.

For let the most potent sinner upon earth speak out, and tell us, whether he can command down the clamours and revilings of a guilty conscience, and impose silence upon that bold reprover. He may perhaps, for a while, put on a high and big look; but he cannot, for all that, look conscience out of countenance. And he may also dissemble a little forced cheerfulness; but none knows in the mean time, besides his own wretched self, of those

secret

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 107

secret bitter infusions, which that terrible thing, called conscience, intermixeth with all his pleasures.

On the contrary, if we consider the virtuous person, let him declare freely, whether ever his conscience checked him for his innocence, or upbraided him for an action of duty; whether it ever did bestow any of its hidden lashes, or concealed rebukes, on a mind sincerely upright, virtuous, and good.

I proceed now unto my

IVth, AND LAST general head, wherein I am to specify some particular cases or instances, in which this confidence towards God, suggested by a rightly informed conscience, doth most eminently shew and exert itself.

I shall briefly mention three :

1. In our addressees to God by *prayer*.—
When a man shall presume, to come and place himself in the presence of the great searcher of hearts, and to ask something of him, while his conscience is all the while smiting him on the face, and telling him
what

what a rebel and traitor he is to the majesty which he supplicates; surely such a one should think with himself, that the God whom he prays to, is greater than his conscience, and pierceth into all the corruption and baseness of his heart, with a much clearer and more severe inspection: And if so, he must needs resent the provocation more deeply, and revenge it upon him more terribly, unless he prevent it by repentance. A

2d Instance, in which this confidence towards God doth so remarkably shew itself, is at the time of some notable trial, or sharp *affliction*. When a man's friends shall desert him, his acquaintance disown him, and all dependences fail him, and, in a word, the whole world frown upon him; certainly it will then be of some moment, to have his conscience to be his friend, which shall bear up his sinking spirits, and speak greater things for him, than all these together can declare against him. The

3d, and last instance, in which, above all others, this confidence towards God doth most eminently shew and exert itself, is at
the

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 109

the time of *death*: which surely gives the grand opportunity, of trying both the strength and worth of every principle; when a man shall be just about to quit the stage of this world, to put off his mortality, and to deliver up his last accounts to God. At which sad time, his memory shall serve him for little else, but to terrify him with a sad review of his past life, and his former extravagances stript of all their pleasure, but retaining their guilt: What is it then, that can promise him a fair passage into the other world, or a comfortable appearance before his dreadful judge, when he is there? Not all the friends and interests, all the riches and honours under heaven, can speak so much as a word of comfort to him in that condition; they may possibly reproach, but they cannot relieve him.

At this disconsolate time, when the busy tempter shall be more than usually apt to vex and trouble him, and the pains of a dying body to hinder and discompose him, and the settlement of worldly affairs to disturb and confound him, and all things
conspire

conspire to make his sick-bed grievous and uneasy ; nothing can then stand up against all these ruins, and speak life in the midst of death, but a clear conscience.

And the testimony of that shall make the comforts of heaven descend upon his weary head, like a refreshing dew, or shower upon a parched ground. It shall give him some lively earnest, and secret anticipations, of his approaching joy. It shall bid his soul go out of the body undauntedly, and lift up its head with confidence, before saints and angels. Surely the comfort which it conveys at this season, is something bigger than the capacities of mortality ; mighty, and unspeakable ; and not to be understood, till it comes to be felt.

And now, who would not quit all the pleasures and trifles, which are apt to captivate the heart of man, and pursue the greatest rigors of piety and austerities of a good life,—to purchase to himself such a conscience, as at the hour of death, when all the friendships of the world shall forsake him, shall dismiss his soul, and close his eyes with that blessed sentence,

Well

SERM. VI. *The Testimony of Conscience.* 111

Well done, thou good and faithful servant,
enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?

For he, whose conscience enables him
to look God in the face, with confidence
here, shall be sure to see his face also with
comfort hereafter.

S E R M O N VII.

What Repentance and Faith shall be
effectual to Salvation.

[From KETTLEWELL's Measures of Obedience.]

MARK I. 14, 15.

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

THIS being the first command which our blessed Saviour laid upon mankind, after he had taken upon him the office of mediator for them; we, who expect happiness and salvation by him, cannot surely look upon it, but as a matter of more than ordinary importance, to understand the full meaning and purport of these words; especially considering, that if we take them in their largest extent, as he undoubtedly

doubtedly intended them, they comprehend whatsoever he requires of us, in order to our partaking of the kingdom of God. So that if we do but *repent and believe the gospel*, in the sense wherein he commands us to do it, we need not fear, but in and through him we shall be inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.

And from this connexion of these two graces together, *repentance* and *faith* in preaching the gospel, we may observe, that under the gospel itself, *repentance* is indispensably necessary to salvation. And therefore we must not think that Christ so died for sin that we might still live in it; or that the gospel gives any encouragement to vice and wickedness. So far it is from that, that the first duty which our blessed Saviour ever enjoined to mankind, was to *repent* and reform their lives.

And together with that, they were to *believe the gospel*: although *repentance* is necessary, yet it will not avail us without *faith*: which is proper to be observed, because, as some attribute all to *faith*, as if *repentance* was not at all required now; so others

114 *What Repentance and Faith shall be*

attribute all to *repentance*, as if *faith* was of no use in the gospel itself; or at least, as if it was to be confounded with *repentance*, or *repentance* with it: whereas nothing can be more plain, than that our Saviour makes a distinction between *repentance* and *faith*; and yet makes them both absolutely necessary to our obtaining the privileges of the gospel.

Which duties being so recommended, as if they contained every thing that is necessary to our salvation, it concerns us to inquire what these duties are; what is implied in that *repentance*, and that *faith*, which will be so effectual.

NOW, REPENTANCE implies a change and alteration of the mind, productive of a suitable alteration in the life and practice. And this latter is a natural effect of the former; inasmuch as our works and actions will still go along with our purposes and resolutions.

Now this part of repentance from sin, to wit, a leaving or forsaking of it, is its principal ingredient, and the chief thing which
the

the scriptures express by it; it is the main end, whereto the former serves only as the instrument and cause. Godly sorrow, or the grief and trouble of our minds for having offended God, working (as St. Paul says) *that repentance* which will never fail us, nor ever need *to be repented of*. And that repentance includes this alteration of our lives, as well as that other of our minds, the scriptures plainly express to us, when they style it *a repentance from dead works; a turning away from all transgressions, and doing that which is lawful and right; a conversion from darkness unto light; a putting away the evil of our doings, by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.*

These two changes, a change of mind, and a change of practice, make up and perfect the whole nature of a saving repentance. And the change of mind naturally produces the change of practice. It cuts off the very root of all transgression, and plants that of obedience instead of it. And that is the reason why so much is attributed to it in scripture; not upon account of the change of mind solely which is

116 *What Repentance and Faith shall be*

wrought by it, but upon account of that obedience which is the fruit and effect of it. God will not, at the last day, acquit and reward us upon such repentance as is void of obedient works and actions, but upon such only as includes or effects them.

'Tis true, indeed, the wicked and disobedient, who will not reform and obey, but would notwithstanding have right to life and pardon, call something else repentance, which is void of all amendment and obedience. If they confess their sin, and are sad upon it, if they wring their hands, and beat their breasts, and then, giving it hard names and reproachful titles, beg God to forgive them; they think that they have done an acceptable service, and sufficiently repented of it. They take no care to keep off from it, provided they continue to bewail and confess it. For although they bring in before God large catalogues of sins, yet they never strive to lessen them. But when they profess to him, how they have deserved his wrath and eternal judgment, they want nothing but opportunity still further to provoke the same. When
they

they acknowledge how vilely they have affronted him in the breach of his laws; they are still ready to repeat their breaches thereof. All the hard names which they give their sins, are false and forced expressions, they mean no hurt to them all the while. For although they revile them in their words, yet they honour and applaud them in their practice. They are still in love with them at their next meeting; and, for all the ill language which they gave them when they spake of them before God, they will embrace them upon the first occasion, and repeat them upon every return of temptation.

But can any considerate man think, that such a repentance as this shall avail him before God, and save him from perishing when Christ comes to judgment? Surely, he must know nothing, either of God's nature, or of his word, who can be imposed upon so grossly. For God, by the necessity of his very nature, perfectly hates all sin; and so, can never be reconciled to any man, barely for telling him that he is a sinner. To inform him only that we have rebelled

118 *What Repentance and Faith shall be*

against him, is to acquaint him that we are his enemies; whom, in order to vindicate himself, and the authority of his government, he should ruin and destroy, and not cherish and protect. The gospel declares, that he will take severe and endless vengeance on all who die unreformed, and finally disobedient: And then, to own our disobedience to his face, without a true turn and a firm purpose of reformation, is to bid him maintain his law, and execute his sentence; it is to *provoke* his justice, and not to appease it; to hasten and assure our misery, but by no means to prevent or retard it.

But that repentance, whereupon God will pardon us, is such only, as either includes, or ends in obedience and reformation. When he graciously promises, that whosoever repenteth him of his former sins, shall be saved; he means this promise only of such repentance, as implies a forsaking of those sins which we repent of, in our works and actions. It is a repentance *from dead works*; a forbearing to act that, which with our own mouths we confess to be evil. And because it includes a

turn, and a change of our works and actions, from sin to obedience; therefore it is expressed in scripture, by *forsaking and returning*. Thus the apostle says, *repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*. And the prophet Ezekiel: *Repent and turn you from all your transgressions, and so iniquity shall not be your ruin*. For it is only *when the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, that he shall save his soul alive*.

This then is the *repentance* that is required of us as an indispensable condition of our salvation. When Christ shall come to judge the world, according to his gospel, that repentance only will bear us out, and avail us unto life, which either implies, or ends in our obedience.

THE other thing required of us in my text, is FAITH, or *believing the gospel*.— Now *faith* is, the giving credit to a thing, or taking it to be true, upon the testimony or authority of such persons as declare it. And according to the difference of this

testimony, our faith upon it is differenced and distinguished also. For if we believe any thing upon the bare word of a *man*, it is *human* faith; if upon the word and testimony of *God*, it is a *divine* faith.

Divine faith then, is nothing else, but a belief of divine revelations, or a taking any thing to be true, because God has told us that it is so. And therefore we may be said to have divine faith of as many things, as God has any way attested or revealed to us. Under the *old testament*, God revealed his will to the people of Israel, by the mouth and mediation of his servant *Moses*. And because both God and man concurred in this testimony, their belief of his message was their faith, not in God only, but, together with him, in his servant *Moses* also. For because the law and religion which they received, though it came originally from God, was yet derived down to them immediately by *Moses's* ministry, and they knew no otherwise what God had spoken to them, than by his testimony, and upon his authority; therefore they are said, in believing and embracing

embracing that divine law, which was delivered to them by Moses, to believe, not the Lord alone, but also *his servant Moses*; to be *baptized into Moses*; to be *Moses's disciples*; to *obey and hearken unto Moses*; and the like.

But the most clear and full revelation, that God ever made of his will to men, was by the message and mediation of his own son *Jesus Christ*. For God, who in times past, spoke to the people of Israel by Moses, hath under the *new testament* spoken unto us by his son. And the belief of his gospel, or taking for certain truths upon his authority, all those things which he has declared to us in God's name, is called the *christian* faith, as the other was called the *Mosaic* faith. For he being the great author and deriver of this last and greatest revelation down to us, and our belief of it being upon his immediate authority, he being (as St. Paul says) *the author and finisher of our faith*; our belief of it is called, not only *faith towards God*, but also *faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. And because the knowlege of our whole religion
is

is obtained this way, upon our submission to Christ's authority, and our faith or belief of his testimony; therefore is our *religion* itself, most commonly in the scriptures called our *faith*; the preaching of it, is called the *preaching of faith*; the profession of it, a *profession of faith*; the contending for it, a *striving for the faith*; the erring in it, an *erring from the faith*; the falling from it, a *making shipwreck of the faith*; obedience to it is called, the *obedience of faith*; and the righteousness required in it, and effected by it, is called the *righteousness of faith*.

So that in like manner, as the Mosaic faith was a belief of the divinity of the Mosaic law and religion, upon the authority of Moses; the christian faith, is a belief of the divine institution of our christian religion, upon the authority of Jesus Christ. It is a taking upon his word, all those things for truths of God, which he has declared to us in God's name: A belief produced in us by virtue of his testimony, that all his doctrines are God's truths; that all his laws, are God's precepts; that all
his

his promises, are God's promises; that all his threats, are God's threatnings; in short, that the whole religion and gospel, which Christ has delivered to us in God's name, is the very religion and word of God.

The belief of all this, upon the authority of Christ, makes our faith *christian*; and the good effects of it upon our hearts and lives, makes it *justifying and saving*. For when, by virtue of this faith, we truly repent, and sincerely obey, which is the great condition (as we have seen) whereupon at the last day we must all be pardoned and justified eternally; it is a *justifying* faith: As when, by virtue of it, we are saved and delivered from the domination and service, as well as from the eternal punishments of our sins, which are the principal evils that Christ came to save us from; it is a *saving* faith.

This is the nature of our christian faith. And this, under the influences of the divine grace, is the very fundamental cause and natural spring of all our christian service and obedience. For it is because we believe Jesus to be the Lord, and what his laws
are,

are, and how he will deal both with the keepers and the breakers of them; that we set ourselves in very deed, to observe and keep them. It is our belief, which lets us see the truth and reasonableness of his precepts, the power of his assistances, the glory of his rewards, and the terror of his punishments; and in all respects convinceth us, of the beauty, and profit of obedience.

And this conviction in our minds, cannot well miss, if we duly attend thereto, of gaining our hearts and resolutions. For the belief of his endless judgments will raise our fears; the belief of his infinite rewards will quicken our hopes; the belief of his inexpressible kindness will kindle our love; and by all these, our souls will be led into eager desires and firm resolutions, and be fully purposed to keep God's laws, that so they may avoid that terrible death which he threatens to those that break them, and attain those matchless joy which he promises to the obedient.

And when once, by means of this faith, God's laws have gained both our wills and affections, which are the inward springs and causes of our actions; they will naturally

SERM. VII. *effectual to Salvation.* 125

rally produce obedience. We shall quickly go on to perform what we resolve, and to do what we desire, and so in very deed to fulfil and obey them.

Upon which account, of our christian faith having so mighty an influence upon our christian and obedient practice, our obedience itself, as being the effect of it, and produced by it, is called in Scripture the *obedience of faith*: and the righteousness which it exacts of us, and which it co-operates to work in us, is called the *righteousness of faith*: And our christian warfare, or striving against sin, is called the *good fight of faith*.

And for this reason it is, because our faith is so powerful a cause and principle of our obedience, that so great a stress is laid upon it in holy Scripture. No man is interpreted to have that faith, which is made the condition of our pardon and acceptance, but he who is acted by it, and in his works is obedient thereto. *The faith** (says St. Paul) *which in Christ Jesus,*

* Gal. v. 5. 6:

126 *What Repentance and Faith shall be*
or the christian religion, *avaieth any thing*
to that righteousness which all christians
hope for, is that only which *worketh by*
love. It begins the change within, by
purifying our hearts and desires; and thence
goes on to perfect it, in our outward
works and actions. And unless it proceed
to this, it will never be able to bear us out,
and to justify us at God's tribunal. For
*there**, (as St. James tells us,) by our *works*
we must all be justified, and not by a faith
only which *worketh nothing*. Such will
be wholly useless, and of no consideration
at that day. It will not any way profit,
and then certainly it cannot save us. For
what doth it profit (as the apostle goes on)
though a man be able to say, he hath faith,
and hath not works; will that be allowed a
sufficient plea in God's judgment? or,
shall that faith save him?—This unworking
faith, is not that effectual faith which the
gospel encourages, but only its outward
form and appearance. For *wilt thou know*
(says the apostle) *O vain man, that faith*
without works is dead? Even as the body

* Jam. ii.

without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. It is faith only in an imperfect degree, and a weak unprofitable measure; for it is not arrived to a perfect pitch, or to that complete state, whereto the gospel doth at present promise life, and Christ will at the last day award it, until it shews itself in action, and our lives express the power of it.

So that when all is done, we see that there is no life or pardon promised to any faith that is separate from obedience, but only to such as co-operates with it, and implies it. There is no belief, wherewith our judge at the last day will be satisfied, or wherein we are safe; which either he will accept, or we may trust to,—if our dutiful works are wanting. So that this is, and ever will be (as St. Paul says) *a faithful saying*, and such as every good christian man ought constantly to receive or affirm, that they who *have faith, or have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works:—For this is good and profitable unto men**.

Tit. iii. 8.

AND

AND thus we see, upon the whole, what that REPENTANCE and that FAITH are, which Christ preached upon his entrance into his mediatorial office; and why these are represented as the sum and substance of our whole christian duty; namely, as containing in them, or effectually producing, the fruits of obedience and a good life. When Christ shall come to judgment, no *repentance*, or *faith*, will avail us, but only such as shall have kept the commandments. If we be acquitted at that day, it must be for a working service; and not for any change of mind, or any belief of the gospel, without obedience.

or wherein we are safe; which either he will accept, or we may trust to—if our sinful works are wanting. So that this is, and ever will be (as St. Paul says) a faithful saying, and such as every good christian man ought constantly to receive or believe, that they who have faith, or have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works:—For this is good and profitable unto

S E R M O N VIII.

Prayer ineffectual without Obedience.

[From KETTLEWELL's Measures of Obedience.]

MATTHEW VII. 7, 8.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

GREAT things are spoken in scripture of prayer. And that our prayers may be effectual; it concerns us, in point of interest as well as duty, to inquire what conditions and qualifications they ought to be attended with.

*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him** (says the psalmist) *to all that*

* Ps. cxlv. 18.

call upon him in truth.—Again he says, *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee**.—And our Saviour says, *All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, he will give it you*†.

So that if men want any thing, which they desire God would bestow upon them, it is because they do not ask it of him. *Ye have not*, says St. James, *because ye ask not*‡. For not only the overflowing goodness of God's own nature, but, besides that, the interest of his son Jesus Christ, our mediator at God's right hand, gives us a full security in all our requests, that we shall obtain any thing which we ask in his name. *Ask any thing*, says he, *in my name, and I will do it*§.

Nay so dear is he to Almighty God, that although he himself should not move in it, yet, through the strength of God's inexpressible love to him, they who ask in his name shall obtain their petitions.

* Pl. lxxvi. 5.

† Jam. iv. 2.

‡ Matt. xxi. 22.

§ John xiv, 14.

*Verily, verily, says he, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you; for the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me *.*

And seeing, as the apostle says, that we have so great and powerful an high priest at God's right hand, whether our suit be for pardon, or for strength, or for whatsoever else, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need †.

Now the reason, why our prayers and calling upon God are set forth to be so availing for obtaining the graces that we pray for, is, because those very prayers themselves are naturally a means and instrument of our serving God and obeying him. And besides their *natural* efficacy to this purpose, our prayers have also a *supernatural* tendency to make us do the will of God, through the aids of divine grace.

For we have great difficulties to conflict with, and great hindrances to overcome,

* John xvi. 23, 26, 27. † Heb. iv. 14, 16.

call upon him in truth.—Again he says; *Tbou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee**.—And our Saviour says, *All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, he will give it you*†.

So that if men want any thing, which they desire God would bestow upon them, it is because they do not ask it of him. *Ye have not*, says St. James, *because ye ask not*‡. For not only the overflowing goodness of God's own nature, but, besides that, the interest of his son Jesus Christ, our mediator at God's right hand, gives us a full security in all our requests, that we shall obtain any thing which we ask in his name. *Ask any thing*, says he, *in my name, and I will do it*||.

Nay so dear is he to Almighty God, that although he himself should not move in it, yet, through the strength of God's inexpressible love to him, they who ask in his name shall obtain their petitions.

* Pl. lxxvi. 5.

† Matt. xxi. 22.

‡ Jam. iv. 2.

|| John xiv, 14.

Verily,

*Verily, verily, says he, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you; for the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me *. And seeing, as the apostle says, that we have so great and powerful an high priest at God's right hand, whether our suit be for pardon, or for strength, or for whatsoever else, let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need †.*

Now the reason, why our prayers and calling upon God are set forth to be so availing for obtaining the graces that we pray for, is, because those very prayers themselves are naturally a means and instrument of our serving God and obeying him. And besides their *natural* efficacy to this purpose, our prayers have also a *supernatural* tendency to make us do the will of God, through the aids of divine grace.

For we have great difficulties to conflict with, and great hindrances to overcome,

* John xvi. 23, 26, 27. † Heb. iv. 14, 16.

in the doing of our duty. There is much hardship in a holy course, to make us unwilling; and if we have a will to it, we yet find much weakness in ourselves, that renders us unable to continue in good living, and to perform constantly all those good things which God hath commanded us.

And therefore, to supply these defects, and to support us in the doing of our duty (notwithstanding these infirmities,) we have a necessity of the help and assistance of God's grace. And it is our prayers that bring down this aid unto us. They obtain for us the assistances of providence, and a powerful spirit; which, in spite of all our natural weaknesses, shall work out our obedience. God will not deny us these, when we ask them. For as our Saviour argues unanswerably, *If ye, being evil, will yet give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly father (who is infinite in goodness) give the holy spirit to them that ask him* *?

* Luke xi. 13.

And

And since our prayers procure such a never failing aid, and so almighty an assistance for us; they must needs be a certain cause and instrument of our active service and obedience. They imply in us a hearty desire of knowing, and fetch down to us a sufficient power of doing our duty, and of keeping God's holy commandments. And when there is both a preparedness in us to use, and a readiness in God to give us grace sufficient therewith to do his will, there is nothing further wanting to our performance of it.

And hence it is that in the holy Scriptures, prayer is represented as so efficacious. God never intends to reward an idle and unobeying prayer, but such only, as is industrious and obedient. Our prayers must first make us do what he commands, before they obtain those mercies for us which he promises. For when he tells us, that they who call upon him shall find favour in mercy; he means those only, who pray for mercy and pardon, and obey in order to receive it; and who ask for

grace and strength, and work with it after it is granted to them,

THE prayers, indeed, which are generally offered up to God, have little of this in them. For if men pray for mercy and pardon, they take no care to come furnished with repentance and obedience, which is that indispensable condition, whereupon the gospel doth encourage us to ask, and hope for pardon. And if they pray for any virtue or grace, they expect it should drop into them without any endeavours of their own, and will take no pains to cooperate with it. Their prayers for mercy are generally presumptuous; and their prayers for grace, unendeavouring and idle. And obedience all the while, is the least in all their thoughts, and has the least of all their care. All their religion is only to be often upon their knees, and to observe the stated times and seasons of prayer; they are a praying and desiring, but not a working and obeying people. They are of a sordid religion, which would receive all, and give nothing. Their petitions look
alto-

altogether on the reward, but quite overlook the duty. They would take all from God, but do nothing for him.

But this is such a way of praying, as will most certainly delude men, but can never do them good. It is inconsiderate hope, and downright folly, to expect, that ever God should hear our prayers for pardon, whilst we continue in our sins. For since he has so frequently, so plainly, and so peremptorily declared, that at the last day he will pardon none, but the penitent and obedient; it is impudent and absurd to beg pardon, whilst, without any amends, we continue to sin and disobey! It is to desire of him, that he would break his word; that he would pardon and acquit us, when his gospel condemns us. It is to beg of him that he would frame another religion, and another law, than that of his son Jesus Christ; a religion which would save us, when that condemns and destroys us. Nay, by such asking forgiveness from him, whilst we go on in rebelling against him; we do as good as desire, that he would cease to be governor of the world,

and leave us to our own selves; that we might have no law, but our own wills; that we might do what he forbids, without undergoing what he threatens. We only ask leave to sin, and crave a liberty to transgress, without suffering; and desire that we might break his laws, but that he would not punish us. And what man now dare presume, that such shameless desires as these, should be granted to him? That God would desert his laws, and alter his religion, and cast off his government over men, when they request it? For in very deed we see, that to desire him to forgive us, whilst we are going on in our sins, is in effect to put up all these unreasonable and absurd petitions to him.

And then, as for the other sort of petitions, our asking for any virtue or grace, without putting forth any endeavours after it; it is as certain to meet with no good answer, as the other. For to pray thus, is plainly to play the hypocrite with God Almighty, and flatly to dissemble with him. It is to beg that, which we do not care for; to ask that, which we refuse; to pretend

pretend desire for that, which we account is worth no endeavour. And what a miserable piece of falsehood is this now, when a man makes his actions most palpably to give the lie to his words? For he tells God, that he earnestly desires his help, to work in him a pure heart; but yet he will do nothing for it, nor avoid the least occasion of impurity. He begs his grace to assist him, to a meek and patient spirit; but when he is off his knees, he thinks his work is done, for he never after uses any means to procure it, or takes any care to nourish and preserve those degrees of it which he hath already. Surely, any man of common understanding must needs see, that such desires as these were never in his heart, but dwelt only upon his tongue. In reality, he cares not what becomes of the graces which he has prayed for, and was no further concerned about them, than that he might be able barely to say, that he had asked them. Or at best, if he did desire them at all; yet was his desire far from that degree, which he pretends: It was a weak wish, rather than a desire; an imperfect inclination
that

that could effect nothing. It may be, he had rather have that grace which he asks, than go without it; but he had rather want it, than be at any pains for it.

Yea, it is well, if many times his heart is not set against those very graces which he begs, whilst he is asking of them, which is more than barely being unconcerned for them. For how often doth it happen, that a man prays for charity, whilst he is in love with malice; that he begs sobriety, whilst his heart is upon intemperance; that he asks justice, whilst his affections incline to deceitfulness and wrong? This, in very deed, is the case of most, if not of all impenitent and wicked men. For they love their sins, and resolve to continue in them; and yet even then pray for such graces, as are contrary to them. Now here it is plain, that their heart doth not go along with their tongues: For they are not willing to lose that, which they pray to God that they may leave; and are afraid to receive that, which they beg to have. They only pretend desire, but are possessed in truth with hatred and aversion.

And

And then, as for all the good promises which they make to God in their prayers; namely, that if he will forgive them, they will never do so any more; but become new men, and watch more carefully, and sin more seldom, and obey more constantly and universally;—so long as their prayers are thus unendeavouring and idle, all this is but hypocritical pretence, and deceitful imagination. For if, when their prayers are over, they take no care still to perform their obedience, which they promised while they were at them; is it not clear to every one, that all is delusion and falsehood, and that they lie and dissemble in these their promises, as well as they did in their professions? All their engagements signify nothing at all; they meant no such thing while they made them, nor ever after think upon them to make them good.

And can any man now be so intolerably weak, and shamefully blind, as to imagine, that God should reward such idle prayers, and give a blessing upon such hypocritical and feigned language? To dissemble thus with God Almighty, is not to honour, but

but to abuse him; and so fits us, not for any expressions of his love, but only of his wrath and indignation. It is to pass affronts, instead of begging kindness; to make a mockery of his condescensions; and to turn that sacred and inestimable liberty (which he has graciously indulged to mankind) of making known their desires to him for a supply and satisfaction of them, into a fraudulent trick and opprobrious dissimulation.

BUT if ever we hope to have our prayers heard, the true and only way is, to observe St. John's rule, of asking only what is according to God's will. *For this*, says he, *is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he beareth us* *. And what that will of God is, concerning any of those things which we have to pray for, we can learn no where but from his holy gospel.

Now in that, we are plainly told, that as for pardon of sins, his peremptory will

* 1 John v. 14.

is, that no man shall meet with it, but he only who has repented of them, and obeyed him. *Repent, (says St. Peter) that your sins may be blotted out*.*—And, *except you repent, says our Saviour, ye shall all perish†.* For when we are all brought to Christ's tribunal at the great day, to be there eternally acquitted or condemned; we are taught in the most express words, that *judgement shall pass upon every man according to his works‡.* So that if we would ask pardon and forgiveness according to God's will, and in such sort as he has promised to grant it, and we may justly hope to receive it, we must desire it in repentance, and in true resolutions and readiness to obey.

And then, as for strength and grace to enable us to overcome any sin, and to perform any virtue; we are expressly informed that his will is to grant it to such persons only, as endeavour after those graces which they pray for, and are careful to exercise

* Acts iii. 19. † Luke xiii. 3.

‡ Rev. xx. 12, 13.

the same, and work with them. For God will not bestow new grace upon us, till he see that we have made good use of that which he has bestowed already. We must improve those talents which have formerly been intrusted with us, before he will think us qualified to receive more.

Whatever therefore vain and wicked people may imagine, there is no prayer that will avail them, when obedience is wanting. If we pray for pardon and mercy, God will by no means hear us, unless our hearts are penitent, and our lives obedient. And in our prayers for forgiveness, we must pray for obedience too. We must be as solicitous, for the doing of our duty, as for the receiving of our reward; and never in our prayers omit to ask for that, which Christ thought fit to give us, as the highest instance of those things which we are to pray for, namely, his holy spirit. And when we do pray for that, or for any particular graces of it; we see that we have not done our work barely by desiring it, till we go on also to endeavour after it. We must resolve when we pray, to seek that
grace

grace which we ask for; and we must effectually labour after it, in the diligent use of all those means, whereby it is either acquired or increased, when our prayer is over. All the way, it is only our obedience, which can effectually recommend our prayers. So that whensoever we ask for any thing, if we would have any just hope of receiving it, we must be sure to obey with it.

And for this, the scriptures are express and plain. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, says the psalmist, the Lord will not hear me*.*—And God himself says the same by his prophet Isaiah, in words most full and forcible: *When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear;—your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow: Then, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow†.*

* Ps. lvi. 18.

† Is. i. 15, &c.

Thus

Thus also Solomon tells us, that *he that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination* *.—And, *the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, saith St. Peter, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil* †.—And the acceptableness of a christian's prayers consists, as St. Paul intimates, in *lifting up holy hands* ‡.—Before God will pardon any man upon his prayers, Christ's gospel must absolve him; it must promise, before God perform with him. And no man has any other assurance, that he shall receive what he desires, but his having done what God commands. *If my words abide in you, says our Saviour, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you* §. And *whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, says St. John, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight* ||.

AND by all this it appears, that we can have no assurance that our prayers will be effectual, unless we keep God's command-

* Prov. xxviii. 9.

† 1 Pet. iii. 12.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 8.

§ John xv. 7.

|| 1 John iii. 21, 22.

ments, and obey with them. There is no grace to be obtained, without endeavours; nor any pardon to be purchased, without obedience. God will not hear us, if we refuse to hearken unto him. Nothing can maintain a good understanding betwixt him and us, but only the doing of our duty. Upon this condition he will grant us any thing, but without it we can procure nothing. So that after all, it is only our obedience which can make our prayers available, and if ever we expect that God should grant them, we must be sure to work and obey with them.

S E R M O N IX.

The Universal Judgment.

[From Bishop TAYLOR's Sermons.]

2 COR. V. 10, 11.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.— Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

VIRTUE and vice are so essentially different from each other; and this difference is so necessary to be observed, in order to the well-being of men, in private and in societies; that to preserve this difference, and to separate them by sufficient notices, and to distinguish them by rewards, hath been designed by all laws, by the sayings of wise men, by the order of things,

things, and by the special designation of Providence. And the expectations of men have been framed accordingly: to the end that virtue may have a proper seat in the will and in the affections, and may become amiable by its own excellency and its appendant blessing; and that vice may be as natural an enemy to a man, as a wolf to the lamb, and as darkness to light; destructive of its being, and a contradiction to its nature.

But it is not enough, that all the world hath armed itself against vice, and, by all that is wise and sober among men, hath taken the part of virtue, adorning it with glorious titles, encouraging it by rewards, entertaining it with sweetness, and commanding it by precepts: All this is short of man's necessity. This will, indeed, in all modest men, secure their actions in theatres and highways, in markets and churches, before the eye of judges and in the society of witnesses; but the actions of closets and chambers, the designs and thoughts of men, their discourses in dark places, and the actions of retirement and of the night, are left indifferent to virtue or to vice; and of

these, as man can take no cognizance, so he can apply no restraint; and therefore, above one half of human actions is by the laws of man left unregarded and unprovided for.

And besides this, there are some men who are bigger than laws, and some are bigger than judges, and judges themselves are but men, and liable to be imposed on; and if they should not, yet they have notices but of few causes: and there are some sins so popular and universal, that to punish them is either impossible or intolerable; and to question such, would betray the weakness of public justice, and represent the sinner to be stronger than the power that is appointed to be his bridle.

And after all this, we find sinners so prosperous that they escape, so powerful that they fear not; and sin is made safe, when it grows great; and innocence is oppressed; and the poor cries, and he hath no helper; and he is oppressed, and he wants a patron.

And for these, and many other concurrent reasons, if we reckon all the causes

that come before all the judicatories of the world, though the litigious are too many, and the matters of judicature are intricate and numerous; yet the personal and criminal are so few, that of two thousand sins that cry aloud to God for vengeance, scarce two are noted by the public eye, and chastised by the hand of justice.

It must follow from hence, that it is but reasonable, for the interest of virtue, and the necessities of the world, that the private should be judged, and virtue should be tied upon the spirit, and the poor should be relieved, and the oppressed should appeal, and the noise of widows should be heard, and the saints should stand upright, and the cause that was ill judged should be judged over again, and tyrants should be called to account, and our thoughts should be examined, and our secret actions viewed on all sides, and the infinite number of sins which escape here should not escape finally.

And therefore God hath so ordained it, that there shall be a day of doom, wherein all that are let alone by men shall be ques-

tioned by God; and every word, and every action shall receive its just recompence of reward: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Things are so ordered by the great Lord of all the creatures, that whatsoever we do or suffer shall be called to account, and this account shall be exact, and the sentence shall be just, and the reward shall be great; all the evils of the world shall be amended, and the injustices shall be repaid, and the divine providence shall be vindicated, and virtue and vice shall for ever be remarked by their separate dwellings and rewards.

This is that which is here called *the terror of the Lord*. It is *his* terror, because himself shall appear, in his dress of majesty and robes of justice. And it is called *terror*, because it is of all things in the world the most formidable in itself, and it is most fearful to us; where shall be acted the interest and final sentence of eternity. And because it is so intended, I shall all the way represent

SERM. IX. *The Universal Judgment.* 151

it as *the Lord's terror*; that we may be afraid of sin, for the destruction of which this terror is intended.

THEREFORE, let us consider, first of all the *multitude* of those persons who are to be judged: *We must ALL appear*: even you, and I, and all the world. Kings and priests, nobles and learned, the crafty and the easy, the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, the prevailing tyrant and the oppressed party, shall all appear to receive their sentence.

And this is so far from *abating* any thing of its terror and our dear concernment, that it much *increases* it. For although, concerning precepts and discourses we are apt to neglect *in particular* what is recommended *in general*; and in incidencies of mortality and sad events, the *singularity* of the chance heightens the apprehension of the evil; yet it is so by accident, and only in regard of our imperfection; it being an effect of self-love, or some little creeping envy which adheres too often to the unfortunate and miserable; or else because the

sorrow is apt to increase, by being apprehended to be a rare case, and a singular unworthiness in him who is afflicted, otherwise than is common to the sons of men. But in final and extreme events, the multitude of sufferers doth not lessen but increase the sufferings.

As, when the *first* day of judgment happened, that (I mean) of the universal deluge of waters upon the old world, the calamity swelled like the flood, and every man saw his friend perish, and the neighbours of his dwelling, and the relations of his house, and the sharers of his joys, and yesterday's bride, and the new-born heir, and the head of the family, and the honour of the kindred, all dying or dead, drenched in water and the divine vengeance, and they had no place to flee unto, none to resort unto for counsel, no sanctuary high enough to keep them from the vengeance that rained down from heaven; even so it shall be at the last day, when that world and this, and all that shall be born hereafter, shall be involved in the same common calamity, every man's fear shall be increased by

SERM. IX. *The Universal Judgment.* 153

by his neighbour's terror, and the amazement that all the world shall be in shall unite as in one mass.

He that stands in a church-yard in the time of a great plague, and hears the passing bell perpetually telling the sad stories of death, and sees crowds of infected bodies pressing to their graves, and others sick and tremulous, and death dressed up in all the images of sorrow round about him, is not supported in his spirit by the *variety* of his sorrow. And at the day of judgment, when the terrors are universal, besides that it is in itself so much greater, because it can affright the whole world, it is also made greater by communication and a sorrowful influence; grief being then strongly infectious, when there is no variety of state, but an intire kingdom of fear; and amazement is the king of all our passions, and all the world its subjects; and that terror must needs be infinite, when millions of men and women at the same instant shall fearfully cry out, and the noise shall mingle with the trumpet of the archangel, with the thunders of the dying and groaning heavens,

heavens, and the convulsions of the expiring world, when the whole fabric of nature shall shake into dissolution and eternal ashes.—But this general consideration may be heightened with four or five circumstances,

PARTICULARLY, let us consider, what an infinite multitude of angels and men and women shall then appear. It is a vast assembly, when the men of one kingdom, the men of one age, in a single province, are gathered together into heaps and confusion of disorder. But *then*, all kingdoms of all ages, all the armies that ever mustered, all the world that *Augustus Cæsar* taxed, all those hundreds of millions that were slain in all the *Roman* wars, from the foundation of their state to its dissolution; all these, and all that can come into numbers, and that did descend from the loins of *Adam*, shall at once be represented; to which account if we add all the heavenly hosts of angels, we may suppose the numbers fit to express the majesty of that God, and the terror of that judge, who is the lord
and

SERM. IX. *The Universal Judgment.* 133

and father of all that unimaginable multitude.

NEXT, let us consider, that in this great multitude we shall meet all those, who by their example and their holy precepts have, like tapers, enkindled with a beam of the sun of righteousness, enlightened us, and taught us to walk in the paths of justice. There we shall see all those good men, whom God sent to preach to the world, and recal mankind from human follies and inhuman practices. Then we shall find, that those sins which we slighted, or perhaps smiled at here, shall become the greatest terror in the world to us. Men shall feel, that they once laughed at their own destruction, and rejected health, when it was offered to them, upon no other condition, but that they would be wise, and not be in love with death. Then they shall perceive, that if they had obeyed an easy and a sober counsel, they had been partners of the same felicity, which they see so illustrious upon the heads of those righteous persons, whose work is with the
Lord,

Lord, and who by their life and doctrine endeavoured to snatch men's souls from an intolerable misery. And he that sees a crown put upon their heads that give good counsel, will perceive that God did not send them for nothing, on trifling errands, and without regard; but that work, which he crowns in them, he purposed should be effective to us, persuasive to the understanding, and active upon our consciences.

FURTHER: There, in that great assembly, shall be seen all those converts, who upon easier terms, and fewer miracles, and a less experience, and a younger grace, and a seldomer preaching, and more unlikely circumstances, have suffered the work of God to prosper upon their spirits, and have been obedient to the heavenly call.

There shall stand the men of *Nineveh*: and they shall stand upright in judgment. For they, at the preaching of one man, in a less space than forty days, returned unto the Lord their God. But we have heard him all our lives; and, like the deaf adder, have stopped our ears.

There shall appear the men of *Capernaum*, and the queen of the south, and the men of *Berea*, and the first fruits of the christian church, and the holy martyrs; and shall proclaim to all the world, that it was not impossible to do the work of grace, in the midst of all our weakneses, and accidental disadvantages; and that the obedience of faith, and the labour of love, and the contentions of chastity, and the severities of temperance and self-denial, are not such insuperable difficulties, but that an honest and sober person may perform them in acceptable degrees, if he has but a ready ear, and a willing mind, and an honest heart.

And this appearance of honest persons, shall make the divine judgment upon sinners more reasonable and apparently just, in passing upon them the horrible sentence. For why cannot we as well serve God in peace, as others served him in war? Why cannot we love him as well, when he treats us gently, and gives us health and plenty, honours or fair fortunes, reputation or contentedness, quietness and peace, as others did

did upon gibbets and under axes, in the hands of tormentors and in hard wildernesses, in nakedness and poverty, in the midst of all evil things and all sad discomforts,

BUT there is a worse sight than this yet, which, in that great assembly, shall distract our senses, and amaze our spirits. There men shall meet the partners of their sins, and them that drank the round, when they crowned their heads with folly and forgetfulness, and their cups with wine and noises.

There shall men see those poor and perishing souls, whom they did tempt to sin; by power or craft, by witty discourses, or deep dissembling, by scandal or a snare, by evil example or pernicious counsel, by malice or unwariness. And when all is summed up, and from the variety of the particulars is drawn into an uneasy load and a formidable sum, possibly we may find sights enough to frighten all our confidences, and arguments enough to press our evil souls into the sorrows of a most intolerable death.

For

SERM. IX. *The Universal Judgment.* 159

For however we make now but light accounts and evil proportions concerning it; yet it will be a fearful circumstance of appearing, to see one, or two, or ten, or twenty accursed souls, despairing, miserable, infinitely miserable, and accusing any of ourselves as the cause of their eternal sorrows. When a man sees that soul, with whom he sinned, dragged into hell; well may he fear to drink the dregs of his intolerable potion. And most certainly, it is the greatest of evils, to destroy a soul for whom Christ died; and to undo that grace, which our Lord purchased with so much sweat and blood, pains and a mighty charity.

And because very many sins are such as cannot be committed by one person alone, but are sins of society and confederation; it is a hard and weighty reflexion, what shall become of any one of us, who hath tempted another to sin and death. For though God hath spared our life, and they are dead, and their account is sealed up till the day of reckoning; yet the mischief of our sin is gone before us; and it is like a murder, but

but more execrable: The *soul* is dead in trespasses and sins, and sealed up to an eternal sorrow; and we shall perceive, at the day of judgment, what uncharitableness we have done. That soul that cries to those rocks to cover it, if it had not been for thy solicitations, might have followed the lamb in a white robe. That soul which is clothed with shame and flames of fire, would have shined in glory, but that thou didst force it to be partner of thy baseness. And who shall pay for this loss? A soul is lost by our means; we have defeated the holy purposes of our Saviour's bitter passion, by our evil example or persuasions. And what shall happen to him, by whom his brother or sister dies eternally?

Of all the considerations that concern this part of the horrors of the judgment-day, nothing can be more formidable than this, to such whom it doth concern. It behoves them to be infinitely solicitous concerning the event of those souls, with whom they have mingled sin and death.

FURTHER

FURTHER yet ; we may consider that this infinite multitude of men and women, of angels and spirits, is not ineffective, but must needs have influence on every person that appears there. For the transactions of that court are not like the speech of an orator, in a circle of people, heard by them that croud nearest, or *that* sound limited by the resistance of the air, or the inclosure of a wall ; but every thing is represented to every person.

And then let a man consider, when his shame and secret baseness, his hypocrisies and treacherous designs, his falshood to God and startings from his holy promises, his follies and impieties, shall be laid open before all the world, he will then find that he will have reason strangely to be ashamed. All the wise men in the world shall know how vile he hath been. And then let him consider, with what confusion of face would he stand in the presence of a good man and a severe, if peradventure he should suddenly break in upon him, in the commission of his secret sins ; it must be infinitely more, when God, and all the saints and angels of

VOL. I. M heaven

heaven and earth, shall behold and wonder at his impieties and follies.

This argument is most considerable to those, who are tender of their precious name, and sensible of honour. If they rather would chuse death than a disgrace, poverty rather than shame, let them remember, that a sinful life will bring them to an intolerable shame at that day, when all that is excellent in heaven and earth shall be summoned, as witnesses and parties, in a fearful scrutiny.

THE sum of all is this: All that are born of *Adam*, shall appear before God and his Christ; and all the innumerable companies of angels shall be there; and the wicked shall be affrighted with every thing they see: And there they shall see those good men, that taught them the ways of life: There they shall see those who under less opportunities and advantages than they enjoyed, have repented and turned into the ways of righteousness: There they shall see all those evil persons, whom themselves have tempted into the ways

SERM. IX. *The Universal Judgment.* 163

ways of death, who shall fearfully upbraid and confound their consciences: And there shall all the secrets of their hearts be disclosed, and all their privacies be laid open, before the faces of men and angels.

SEEING therefore that all these things shall come to pass, let us consider, what manner of persons we ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness.

S E R M O N X.

Christ the Author of Rest unto
our Souls.

[From Dr. CLAGETT's Second Volume.]

MATT. XI. 28.

*Come unto me all ye that labour, and are
heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

NO kind of grief fits so heavy upon the mind of man, as that which is made by the guilt of sin, and a just fear of punishment. And because our Lord, in this promise of rest, could not mean to exclude those that labour under the *greatest* weight, but rather to invite *them* above all others; I shall therefore at this time consider what that *rest* is which he promiseth to guilty minds; being persuaded, that as no argument can be more profitable, so none will be more welcome and grateful to all that desire to be saved.

As

As for those who are so bewitched with the pleasures of sin, that they feel not the stings of it; who drown the cries of their conscience in the amusements and vanities of the world; these, as long as they are able to make this miserable shift, are not in a condition to desire other relief, nor do they care where it is to be had. But they who apprehend how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and that their sins have made them liable to his justice,—they indeed are prepared to obey the call of our blessed Saviour, and to try if he will perform what he promises, when he says, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

AND this is the great prerogative of the gospel, that it alone can pacify the conscience, and give ease to a mind that labours under the weighty care of being reconciled to the offended majesty of God: It gives that satisfaction, I mean, *which in the end will not deceive.* And no other is to be valued. For what is a man the

better for a false assurance that all is well, which perhaps will vanish to-morrow, and then leave him under an amazing disappointment; which the longer it lasts makes his danger the greater, and if it lasts to the end of his life, hath all along hindered him from using the true means of safety. What is this better than a pleasant dream that holds a man fast asleep, while the fire is raging in his house, and there is none to wake him, till the flames have cut off every way by which he might escape? Therefore when our Lord promiseth, that we shall find rest unto our souls, he doth undoubtedly mean, that repose of mind, those comforts and joys, which will not betray us in the end.—And this is not the least commendation of that *rest* which he gives, *that it is well grounded*, that our souls shall be staid upon principles of truth, and such as we may safely rely upon.

FURTHERMORE; the rest which he promises is *complete and full*; and in that respect also is fit to quiet all those cares and fears that vex the mind of miserable sinners.

sinners. For he has promised the forgiveness of all our sins, and given us assurance of God's particular favour and protection; and of eternal life and glory in another state, when this life once vanisheth away. He hath told us, that his death was a sacrifice for the expiation of our sins. And the doctrine which he delivered, is a dispensation of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Now, thus far all things are as we would have them; and nothing as yet appears, but that we may discharge every unquiet thought in the arms of our blessed Redeemer.

BUT then, we are to consider in the next place the *condition* required on our part for the obtaining of this *rest*. And this truly seems to be very easy; since no more is required, than *coming to Jesus* for it. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* For whatever is meant by this condition, we might hope that it is no hard thing, which is expressed by so easy a word; and

that we need not fear to go to the bottom of its meaning. Elsewhere our Saviour saith, *I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* So that to come to Christ, is to believe in him, and therefore to be persuaded of the truth of his promises; which must needs be a gentle condition, because there is so much reason why we should believe them, and we can have no prejudice against them.

And, no doubt, most men would be glad to rest here, without travelling any farther: And so without question they might, if it were not for this one thing; that in the doctrine of our Saviour, there are not only gracious promises, but holy precepts also; and that so great a stress is laid upon keeping them, that if we do not, we are but where we were before; our sin remains, and the wrath of God abideth on us. For, says our Saviour, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my father which is in heaven.*

Now,

Now, if we are to believe him in this too, then *coming to Christ* must of necessity signify more than bare believing, even *doing his will also*; which in the following verses is expressed, *by learning of him, and taking his yoke upon us.*

And here it is, that men begin to fall in their opinion of the grace of the gospel, and of our Lord's invitation; because he seems to take away with one word what he promises with another. On the one hand, he offers rest; on the other, he requires labour. But yet, he that is truth hath said, that if we will come unto him, we shall find rest; and withal, that we have no reason to be discouraged with the condition, *Learn of me*, says he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*; that is, be not afraid to submit to my rules, for I do not impose them in pride, or for my own sake, but in charity for your's: *Take my yoke upon you; for it is easy: and my burden is light.*

AND now we are got thus far, we may, with this encouragement, venture to the end; and dare to look upon every circumstance,

stance, which seems to make our duty grievous.

There are but *two* things of this kind, and they are these; namely, *The perfection of that duty which the Christian law requires,*—and *The penalty of disobedience.*

Let us first consider the *former* of them; namely, *The perfection of that duty which the Christian law requires of us.*

It requires a more perfect righteousness than either the law of Moses, or the law of nature, did before. And this is one reason, why the Christian baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, whether to Jews or Gentiles; because they must become new men, and as it were *born again*, by living up to those divine principles, and holy rules, which are peculiar to the Christian doctrine.

And here are divers causes of complaint.

The Christian law lays a severe restraint upon our natural appetites and inclinations; which in themselves do often carry us as violently to those satisfactions which the law of Christ forbids, as to those which

it

it allows. There is in every man by nature the love, either of pleasure, or greatness, or revenge, or the like; and this inclination for the most part stiffened by custom; so that he cannot be a Christian without self-denial, and putting himself to pain. And the duty of this kind may be so grievous, that as our Lord himself hath described it, it may be like the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye.

And the Christian law hath made no allowance for the prevailing opinions and customs of the world. In common account, to forgive one injury is to be exposed to another; to use plain-dealing is judged not the way to be rich; and to neglect several opportunities of gain or pleasure, though for conscience' sake, is thought despicable and foolish. But though it is a grievous thing to lie under contempt, yet the doctrine of Christ, without consideration of this hard case, hath tied us up to contrary rules; and expressly required us, not to be conformed to this world.

We

We must also guard ourselves against innumerable temptations to the sins of pride, covetousness, envy, ambition, and the like inordinate affections; to which a Christian must by no means consent. The very opportunities of doing ill, are in some cases hard to be refused; and moreover, every sin hath its proper encouragements, which beset us in all places. And these are so busy and importunate, that some think it impossible to be religious, without retiring from the conversation of the world. And what *rest* can there be in perpetual watchfulness, and standing upon our guard? And yet our Lord himself thought this necessary for us: *Watch and pray*, says he, *that ye enter not into temptation.*

Moreover, The law of Christ prescribes to the *thoughts and affections*, as well as the outward action: If it be hard to forbear the action itself, what pains must be taken to conquer the desire, and to bring it under subjection and discipline?

Also, It is not easy to suffer; yet if need were, we must take up the cross, and be always in mind prepared to endure reproach,

reproach, the loss of goods, yea, and of life itself, for righteousness' sake. And the scripture, speaking of this, doth acknowledge, that no chastisement for the present is joyous, but grievous. So that in giving up ourselves to Christ, we seem to commit ourselves to a *sea of troubles*, instead of making to a *haven of rest*. *He that will be my disciple, saith our Lord, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

This is enough to shew the strictness of the rule, and the perfection of virtue and piety, which the gospel requires.

But that which makes all more grievous is, *The other circumstance I mentioned, namely, The penalty which is annexed to our disobedience.*—For this is no less than exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. *The hour is coming, saith our Lord, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

AND

AND NOW that we have heard these things, we may be exceedingly amazed, as our Lord's first disciples were, when they heard the like, and say, *Who then can be saved?* or at least, Where is the truth of his promise? For the condition of his promise is so hard, and the consequence so terrible, if we fail of the condition, that the extreme danger, and the great uncertainty, seems to create a new trouble, not well consistent with the promised *rest*. He is, indeed, true and faithful, that hath promised; but whilst our soul is troubled, how can we believe that it is at rest? How therefore shall we bring these things together? The truth is, nothing has more exercised the wits of men, than to find out expedients for this purpose.

Some have said, That Christ himself hath fulfilled all righteousness in our stead; and that upon our faith, his righteousness is imputed to us for justification.—This indeed would answer all at once; for if this be true, the gospel doth not only release us from punishment, but from duty too. But neither our Lord, nor his apostles,

cles, have any where told us this. Indeed, he hath promised to save us from God's angry justice; and *that*, because he was a sacrifice for sin offered in our stead.—But we find, that he hath required of us the keeping of his commandments, as a condition of that salvation.

Others, therefore, have tried other expedients; as for instance, what may be done by mortification, fasting, and other bodily severities.—But these things can never compensate for the omission of our necessary duty, or satisfy for the commission of any known sin. Bodily austerities, no doubt, in a proper manner and degree, are pleasing to God, and profitable for our souls; when they are intended to express a just indignation at ourselves for having sinned; when, to break the wicked custom, they are imposed as penalties and revenges to be inflicted, as soon as we have committed any wicked action. But if bodily exercise profiteth nothing, as the scripture assures us it doth not, unless it be *profitable unto godliness*, and helpeth to make the soul the better; we are still driven back to
that

that hard point, which we would fain lose the sight of, That without a new heart, and a new life, there is no hope of God's pardon.

In short, If we leave that one path of obedience, we may try a thousand byeways; but the truth, which cannot be corrupted, will send us back again to that plain truth of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

IF, THEREFORE, that *rest* which our Lord promiseth is not to be had out of the way of obedience; it remains that we must find it in that way, if we find it at all. Let us therefore try for better success here than we have yet had. Let us see, whether the exactness of rules, and the indispensableness of obedience, must needs make us uneasy under the discipline of Christianity; or rather, if the grace of the gospel doth not mitigate all these severities.

And the first mitigation is this:—That *the gospel leaves room for repentance of known and wilful sins committed after baptism.* If after sin, there were no hope of pardon
upon

upon new obedience; it would indeed be very grievous, to be obliged to obey so perfect a law, under so sad a penalty. For then, if a temptation should once prevail, we should be irrecoverably lost. But blessed be God, it is not thus with us. Though we have failed of our duty, yet we may with good comfort repair our past neglects, by future diligence; being assured, that if we do, God will not impute to us our former sins. And for ever blessed be his name, for the grace of accepting repentance; that grace, which gives the worst of men some good hope, if they will lay hold upon it in time; and without which, the best of men could have no hope at all.

Another mitigation of the severity of the gospel obedience is this; namely, That *the utmost perfection which the gospel requires is not expected, but upon a gradual improvement*;—and such improvement is by no means grievous. It were intolerably hard indeed, if we were obliged, under pain of damnation, to perfect holiness all at once: (which burden they bring upon them-

selves, who leave all to a death-bed repentance.)—But what is the meaning of God's patience and long suffering towards us? Why doth he allow us one year after another, but that we might recover ourselves by degrees, he in the mean time being ready to pardon us as we repent, and to accept us in the way of growing better.

Another mitigation of the severity of the gospel obedience, and which is the last that I shall mention, is this: That *as we grow more exact in obedience to Christ, so our uneasiness under it wears away, and at length it ends in the most pure and perfect delight, that the soul of man is capable of.* Self-denial, and the resisting of temptations, will at first be painful; especially to those that have been used to live without rule and restraint. And there might be some colour for complaint, if this would always last. But the more earnestly we apply our minds to the duties of repentance, and an holy life, the first discouragements will vanish the faster.

THERE-

THEREFORE, having all these encouragements, we may chearfully set about the duties of the Christian life; And if we so do, we have our Saviour's own promise and assurance, that we shall *find rest unto our souls.*

S E R M O N XI.

Folly of losing the Soul.

[From Dr. SHERLOCK on a future State.]

MATT. IV. 8, 9, 10.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them :

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me :

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

IN these words we have a great example set before us for our imitation ; a great and urgent temptation on the one hand, and an extraordinary sense of holiness and firmness

firmness of mind to resist it on the other. The temptation is this,—*the devil taketh up our Saviour into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Our Saviour's constancy in resisting it, is expressed thus: *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

In discoursing hereupon, I shall consider the ADVANTAGES here proposed on the one hand, and the DISADVANTAGES on the other; whereby the wisdom of rejecting this offer will appear; and also the great folly of most men in suffering themselves to be overcome by this temptation, even when it is offered to them in a far inferior degree, than is that of laying before them all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. But I shall consider the absurdity of this choice in its utmost extent, and allow unto men all that is here proposed.

The *advantage* proposed is this; all the accommodations that this world can afford: The *disadvantage* is, going to hell into the bargain,—*all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, do signify all the advantages of happiness, which this whole earth can furnish; the most universal empire, the most absolute command of riches and pleasures, whatever the world can give, whatever human nature can enjoy. And this representation puts the matter most to the advantage of the worldly and sensual. For no man can ever obtain more, in recompence for his eternal happiness, than *all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.* And if this be so losing a bargain,—then,—the saving of a short, miserable, uncertain life,—some faint images of honour, some short and empty scenes of mirth and pleasure, can never come in competition with our future welfare to all eternity.

By falling down to, and worshipping the tempter, is to be understood the renouncing the laws and commands of God, forfeiting the

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 183

the happiness of heaven, and abandoning our souls to destruction.

And we may appeal to every man, who will think seriously of these matters, to judge for himself in this case, whether all the happiness of this world can make any recompence for eternal misery. For every man has a natural sense of this; that it is better to be happy than to be miserable; that it is better to forfeit a temporal than an eternal happiness; that it is better to lose this life, and all the advantages of it, than to be miserable for ever.

This indeed is not well considered by most men; they are fond of this world, and think they can never have their fill of it. While heaven and hell are out of sight, and death and judgment at a distance, their souls are thought very little worth; every trifle will purchase them, every present momentary satisfaction is thought a valuable price for them.

But if we would judge truly of this matter, we must make the case present and sensible. Suppose then, that we had forfeited our souls; that after a voluptuous

and luxurious life, we should find ourselves in hell, tormented in those unquenchable flames,—what would we give for the redeeming of our souls? Would we then think all the kingdoms of the world (if we had them) too dear a purchase for them? Could we then be sent into this world again, to act over a new part, would either the charms and flatteries, or the terrors of this world, prove new temptations to us? Would we venture the loss of our eternal happiness any more, to obtain the pleasures, or to avoid the sufferings of this life?

There can be no doubt but that these are the thoughts, and these are the vain wishes, of those miserable wretches, whose portion in eternal misery is already fixed; for if a man would give even all that he hath to preserve this *temporal* life, certainly *eternal* life is worth *more* than all we have; and were it possible, we would give more than all to redeem us from eternal misery.

And if we believe that thus we shall think, if ever we should be doomed to hell; we ought in all reason to think so now, to prevent so fatal a sentence. And

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 185

since all mankind are of this persuasion, that all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, can be no equivalent for future eternal misery,—I shall not go about to prove it: for the sense of nature is stronger and more powerful than any other arguments. And did men seriously consider, that the purchase and enjoyment of this world would cost them their souls, there would need no other arguments to make them despise the world in all its glory. And therefore my business shall only be, to awaken and quicken this sense in our minds, by such lively representations both of the *advantage* on the one hand, and the *disadvantage* on the other, that we may see and feel the difference between them.

THE ADVANTAGE is,—*all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*: a little part whereof is thought a considerable purchase by most men, and a temptation too big to be resisted. The devil so well knew the force of it, that he ventured to try it upon Christ himself.

Now

Now I shall not go about to disparage the world, which is God's workmanship; nor the enjoyments of it, which are so excellently fitted by our wise and bountiful Creator, to answer and entertain all the appetites of human nature. It is a vain thing to persuade a man, who is easy and prosperous, that this world is not a pleasant place; that there is no difference between a prince and a slave, between riches and poverty, between pain and pleasure; which is to persuade men out of their senses; for they *feel* a difference. The argument before us will permit us to say as many good things of the world as we please; for it consists only in a comparison between the glories of this world, and the miseries of the next; which doth not necessarily suppose, that the advantages of this world are in themselves very little and contemptible, but only that the disadvantages on the other hand are irreparably great.

The usual arguments, therefore, in disparagement of the world, may be left out of this present case; such as, the inconstancy and instability of all earthly things; that

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 187

that riches and honours are uncertain; that our pleasures are not sincere, but intermixed with pain, with cares, with fears, with disappointments. For though we should suppose a man to have the empire of the whole world; to have all the delights of nature at his command; and to have his fortune in his own keeping:—all this would avail him nothing, should he go to hell, after a long, uninterrupted, undisturbed possession of the whole world. And we may appeal to any man, whether he would be contented to be this happy man, upon condition to be miserable for ever. Let us value the world then as highly as we please, admire its splendor and glory, and all its tempting and charming pleasures; so we do but remember at the same time, that to go to hell for them is too dear a purchase: for no temptation can be too big for such a thought as this.

But yet this is but an imaginary case; for the sun never saw such a happy man: and it is certain none of us are ever likely to have such a proffer. It more concerns us therefore to enquire, how much of this world

world most men get who are willing to part with eternal happiness for it; which is so very inconsiderable, that those must have a very mean opinion of their souls, who can think what they obtain of this world a sufficient compensation for them.

To which purpose it is proper to observe, that when we compare all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, with eternal happiness in the world to come, is meant no other enjoyment of the things of this life, than such as is contrary to our expectations in the other; for there is no competition between the loss of eternal happiness and any other gain; and therefore no other gain can come into the account, when we compare our gain and our loss.

Excepting the case of persecution, a good man may be very rich and honourable, and enjoy all the delights and pleasures of this life, as much as it becomes a man to enjoy them. For the world was made to be enjoyed; and a good man, who observes the rules of virtue, may enjoy this world, as far as God made it to be enjoyed;

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 189

enjoyed; and therefore may be as happy, as this world was intended to make him. Which is very fit to be observed, to prevent any unreasonable prejudices against the laws of our Saviour; as if we could not save our souls, without renouncing all the ease and pleasures, and comforts of this life; whereas, in ordinary cases, we may enjoy all the happiness this world was made for, and all the happiness which *we* were made to enjoy in this world, and go to heaven when we die.

The only acquisition then of this world, which comes in competition with our eternal interests, is a *sinful* acquisition, what we cannot have, or cannot enjoy, without sin; for nothing can destroy our souls, but sin; and therefore nothing but the sinful acquisitions of this world can hurt us; sinful riches, sinful honours, and sinful pleasures.

And this will enable us to make a just estimate what the acquisitions of this world are, for which men will venture to forfeit their eternal happiness; namely, whatever degrees of honour, riches, power, or pleasure,

pleasure, men gain by sin; above what they could have got, had they lived soberly, righteously, and godly in this world; this is their gain, this is the reward of their sin, and the price of their souls. So, as some sinners gain very little, so others gain more of this world, by their sins; but none gain more than the present rewards and pleasures of sin, which are commonly so dearly paid for in *this* life, that a good man need not envy their gain.

It is no hard matter to prove, though it be not easy to persuade bad men of it, that the sincere practice of piety and virtue makes a man much happier in this life than all sinful pleasures and enjoyments can do; for a virtuous man has pleasures which bad men know nothing of, and has none of their troubles and cares. The difference between riches and poverty, a mean and a prosperous fortune, is most visible among good men themselves. A good man, it is true, who has a plentiful fortune, is in more easy and happy circumstances for this world, than a good man who is poor and oppressed; but a *virtuous poor man* is much happier

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 191

happier in this world than the greatest and most powerful sinner.

This I know will not affect bad men, because they do not feel what good men enjoy; though they may easily imagine, that for a man to be at peace in his own conscience, to have calm and easy passions, to be contented with what he has, to live in submission to God, and an entire dependence on his providence, and to have the transporting hopes of immortal life, is another kind of pleasure than what they feel, and such as a wise man would prefer before all the pleasures of sin: And then whatever advantages men gain by sin, they lose more than they get, even in this life, when they forfeit the pleasures of innocence and virtue.

But I shall not insist on this, but only desire them to reflect upon what they feel themselves, and upon the visible rewards of their sins in this world, and then compute what advantage they get by it.

All sinners, who have not sinned away all sense of virtue, and the very remembrance of a God, and of another world,—
gain

gain shame, and fear, and a guilty remorse, which sours all their enjoyments, with the dreadful expectations of present or future vengeance.

Ill-gotten riches, and undeserved honours, make them the mark and the sport of fortune; and they many times see themselves blown up like a bubble, and burst as suddenly.

Others gain a halter, a stab, or a prison, languishing diseases, or racking and tormenting pains, which shorten their lives, or make them miserable.

And those who gain most, gain a life of brutishness and sensuality, which it is impossible should be the happiness of a man, who has a diviner principle in him, and was made for greater things.

And this in short is the *advantage*, which wicked men obtain, even if they could be masters of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

LET us now consider, in the next place, what is the **DISADVANTAGE** of obtaining
all

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 193

all this, to the loss of our eternal interests in the other world.

It is *the loss of heaven*.—And were it possible for me to give you a view of those glories, nay, to draw but some of the darkest shades of them, it would make you despise this world, and pity the folly of sinners, who gain these advantages here with the loss of heaven.

But these are such things as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. It is represented in scripture by some earthly comparisons, by a *kingdom*, and a *crown that fadeth not away*; it is to *see God*, and to *dwell for ever in his presence*; it is *light*, and *life*, and *joy*, *rivers of pleasure*, and *fulness of joy*. These are the greatest and best things we know in this world; and these serve only for some faint images of the happiness of heaven; which is as much greater than all we yet know of these things, as to live, and to reign, and to rejoice in the immediate presence of God, may reasonably be supposed to excel all earthly glories and pleasures.

One great circumstance which heightens this loss is, that heaven is the *only state of happiness* in the next world. In *this* world, bad men find other diversions and entertainments, which are more agreeable to their inclinations than the thoughts and hopes of heaven. They have something, how mean soever it is, which they call their happiness, which employs their thoughts and time, and deludes their fancies, as children divert themselves with childish sports, to the neglect of greater and better things. But when this world is at an end, and can enchant them no longer, when they open their eyes in the next world, and see themselves stript of all that they called their happiness, and see nothing that can make them happy, but what they have refused, what they have now no right to, what they shall never have; when they see their loss, and must think of it, and think eternally of it, without any thing to divert, or to allay and mitigate the anguish of such thoughts: What this is, God grant we may never feel; I am sure no words can ever express.

And

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 195

And it will be a great aggravation of this loss to consider, That this is an happiness they might have had, an happiness which was purchased for them by the blood of Christ, which they refused and slighted, and did not think worth their having. Those blessed saints, whom they now see possessed of eternal glory, had no better title to it originally than themselves. Christ purchased heaven for us all; but those happy souls thought it worth their while to obey God here, that they might be happy hereafter; other foolish sinners despised heaven and lost it. It is a great trouble to any man to miss an opportunity of making himself happy, though it were only his misfortune, not his fault; but what a piercing thought will it be, when a man sees himself shut out of heaven, to remember that God would have bestowed heaven upon him, but he rejected and scorned the offer; and would not be persuaded to accept of heaven, by all the endearments and obligations of an infinite love. With what fury, and indignation, and self-revenge,

O 2

revenge, will such guilty souls torment themselves!

And, above all others, the greatest aggravation of this loss is, that it is *for ever*. They have lost an opportunity of making themselves eternally happy, which can never be recalled. And if a temporary disappointment, if every delay of our desires, be so uneasy and troublesome; what will eternal despair be?

So that if we consult all the passions of human nature; if we believe that the sight and presence of a great happiness will excite in us strong and vehement desires; that to miss it will overwhelm us with the sharpest sorrows; that a reflection on our guilt and folly will turn all our passions upon ourselves; and that eternal disappointment will fill us with raging despair; if there be any pain, any torment in these passions, this is the punishment of loss.

But the *loss of heaven* is not all. But there will be actual and eternal torments over and above: even those inconceivable torments, which are represented in scripture by

SERM. XI. *Folly of losing the Soul.* 197

by lakes of fire and brimstone; the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; blackness of darkness; the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never goeth out. The very naming of which strikes the fancy with all the images of terror. And yet we have reason to think, that the punishment itself is much more terrible than all the representations that can be made of it.

I need not go about to prove, that all the happiness of this world is dearly purchased with eternal miseries. If any man doubts of this, let him reflect upon the frame and constitution of his own mind. Every man finds in himself a greater aversion to pain and misery, than a fondness for pleasure. This very principle governs the world, and keeps mankind in order. The fear of punishment in this world restrains men's passions: and no man sins, but in hopes of impunity. And when these hopes fail men, and they come to suffer for their sins, they repent that they committed them; which is an argument, that they do not think them worth what they suffer for them. And if it is possible by

human punishments to make men repent of their sins, what will they do when the vengeance of God seizes on them in the next world ?

Besides this, all men will find in themselves, that they want something to support them under great sufferings ; and that nothing can do this for any long time, but only a good conscience, and great hopes ; that they suffer for a good cause, and that their sufferings shall be rewarded. A sudden and obstinate resolution may hold out for a time, but is soon subdued, and cannot harden itself against long and extreme miseries.

The remembrance of their sinful enjoyments will be no relief to them, for they are past and gone ; and the pleasures of sin last no longer than the enjoyment.

And as for hope, they can have none ; for their miseries come after their pleasures, and will have no end. Eternal and endless miseries are without hope ; and a sinner who suffers without hope, must feel all that he suffers, and sink under it.

And

And this is the state of human nature. Which being so, it had been good for that man he had never been born, how fortunate soever he has been in this world, who must be miserable for ever.

AND NOW, every man can very easily apply it to himself; for the sum of all is this: Not to forfeit our eternal happiness for any, or for all the pleasures and enjoyments of this world. This, I hope, we all resolve; and that we may not deceive ourselves herein, I will only add this one thing: That if we resolve not to forego our eternal inheritance in the other world, we must resolve also not to hazard it; for if we venture, we may lose.

And this is the way that many souls perish. Men cannot voluntarily give up all their future hopes for any present enjoyment; but yet they will venture a little, to taste some of the pleasures of sin; and when they have once begun to venture, they oftentimes venture on, till they lose all. Which has been the case of so many thousands, that it should make all men,

who love their souls, aware of the cheat,
For if all the kingdoms of the world, and
the glory of them, be not a sufficient
recompence for our eternal welfare, no
wise man, for the sake of them, ought to
bring himself into danger ; that is to say,
he ought not to commit the least known
sin for the greatest temporal advantages
which may ruin him for ever.

S E R M O N XII.

Baseness of Ingratitude.

[From Dr. South's first Volume.]

JUDGES VIII. 34, 35.

And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side.

Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.

THESE words, being a result or judgment given upon matter of fact, naturally direct us to the foregoing history, to inform us of their occasion. The subject of which history, was that heroic and victorious judge of Israel, Gideon; who by
the

the greatness of his actions had merited the offer of a crown and kingdom, and by his humility and moderation had refused it.

The whole matter is contained and set before us, in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of this book. Where we read, that when the children of Israel, according to their usual method of sinning after mercies and deliverances, and thereupon returning to a fresh enslavement to their enemies, had now passed seven years in cruel subjection to the Midianites, a powerful and insulting enemy, and who oppressed them to that degree, that they had scarce bread to eat, or houses to dwell in; for in the 2d verse of the 6th chapter, we find them dwelling under ground, in dens and caves; and in verses the 3d and 4th, no sooner had they sown their corn, but we have the enemy coming up in armies, and destroying it: In this sad and calamitous condition, I say, in which one might have thought, that a deliverance from such an oppressor would have even revived them, and the deliverer eternally obliged them; God raised up the spirit of this great person, and ennobled

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 203

nobled his courage and conduct, with the intire overthrow of this mighty and numerous host of the Midianites.

And so quick a sense did the Israelites, immediately after it, seem to entertain of the merits of Gideon, and the obligation he had laid upon them, that they all as one man, tender him the regal and hereditary government of that people, in the 22d verse of this 8th chapter: *Then said the men of Israel to Gideon, rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also; for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.* To which he answered with a true greatness of mind, and by that answer redoubled the obligation, in the next verse; *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, but the Lord shall rule over you.*

Thus far we see the workings of a just gratitude in the Israelites; and goodness on the one side, nobly answered with greatness on the other.

And now, after so vast an obligation, owned by so free an acknowledgment, could any thing be expected, but a conti-

usual intercourse of kindnesſes, at leaſt on *their* part, who had been ſo infinitely obliged and ſo gloriously delivered? Yet, in the 9th chapter, we find theſe very men, turning the ſword of Gideon againſt himſelf; cutting off the very race and poſterity of their deliverer, by the ſlaughter of threeſcore and ten of his ſons, and ſetting up the ſon of his concubine, the blot of his family, and the monument of his ſhame, to reign over them; and all this, without the leaſt provocation or offence given to them, either by Gideon himſelf, or by any of his houſe.

After which horrid fact, I ſuppoſe we can no longer wonder at this account given of the Iſraelites in my text; that *They remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every ſide: Neither ſhewed they kindneſs to the houſe of Gideon, according to all the goodneſs which he had ſhewed unto Iſrael.*

So that the words contain a charge given in againſt the Iſraelites, of that foul and odious ſin of ingratitude; and that, both towards God and towards man: to-
wards

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 205

wards God, in the former verse of the text; and towards man, in the latter verse of it. For such is always the growing contagion of this ill quality, that if it begins at God, it naturally descends to men; and if it first exerts itself upon men, it infallibly ascends to God. If we consider it as directed against God, it is a breach of religion; if as to men, it is an offence against morality. The passage from the one to the other is very easy; breach of duty towards our neighbour, still involving in it a breach of duty towards God; and no man's religion ever survives his morals.

My purpose, is, from this remarkable instance, to treat of the sin of ingratitude. In order to which, I will first shew, under what obligations we are to GRATITUDE.

From whence will appear, in the next place, the baseness and evil of INGRATITUDE.

Now the obligations to GRATITUDE arise, either from the *law of nature*; or from the *law of God*, revealed in holy scripture;

scripture; or from the *law of man*, enacted by the civil power, for the preservation and good of society.

By the *law of nature*, is meant, the mind of God, signified to man, by the bare discourse of his reason; and dictating to him, that he ought to act suitably to the principles of his nature, and to those relations that he stands under.

It is one principal law of nature, that a man should do as he would be done unto. From which alone may be deduced all those rules of charity and justice, which ought to govern the offices of common life, and which alone is enough to found an obligation to gratitude: Forasmuch as no man, having done a kindness to another, would think himself justly dealt withal, by the person who had received the kindness from him, if he should take no notice thereof, and be wholly unconcerned about it. And consequently, neither ought he to be unconcerned in the same case himself.

As to the *law of God*, revealed in holy scripture; it is evident, that gratitude

is

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 207

is enjoined and made necessary, by all those passages which upbraid or forbid ingratitude.

St. Paul reckons the *unthankful* amongst the highest sinners; which shews the virtue opposite to unthankfulness, to bear the same place in the rank of duties, that its contrary doth in the catalogue of sins.

And the like, by consequence, is inferred from all those places, in which we are commanded to love our enemies, and to do good to those that hate us: and therefore certainly much more are we by the same commanded, to do good to those that do good to us.

So that it is manifest, that by the positive written law of God, no less than by the law of nature, gratitude is a debt.

As for the *laws of men*, enacted by the civil power; it must be acknowledged, that gratitude is not enforced by them, by the sanction of any penalties to be inflicted on the person that shall not be found grateful.

And this it is that shews the rare and distinguishing excellency of gratitude, and
sets

sets it as a crown upon all other virtues; that it should plant such an over-ruling generosity in the heart of man, as shall more effectually incline him to what is brave and becoming, than the terror of any penal law whatsoever. So that he shall feel a greater force upon himself from within, and from the controul of his own principles, to engage him to do worthily, than all threatenings and punishments can have upon a low and ungenerous mind, that never acts virtuously but as it is compelled to it; that knows no principle of doing well, but fear; and no conscience, but constraint.

On the contrary, the grateful person fears no court or judge, no sentence or executioner, but what he carries about him in his own breast. His heart is, as it were, in continual labour; it even travails with the obligation, and is in pangs till it be delivered: Even as David, in the overflowing sense of God's goodness to him, cried out, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?*

SUCH

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 209

SUCH being our obligations to *gratitude*, we may from hence infer the evil of *INGRATITUDE*.

There is not indeed any one vice or ill quality incident to the mind of man, against which the world has raised such a loud and universal outcry, as against ingratitude: a vice never mentioned by any author, but with a particular height of detestation; and of such a malignity, that human nature must be stripped of humanity itself, before it can be guilty of it. It is instead of all other vices. Hence it is said, that if you call a man ungrateful, you call him every thing that is bad.

If we would state the nature of it, it may be defined to be, an insensibility of kindnesses received, without any endeavour either to acknowledge or repay them.

To repay them indeed, by a return equivalent, is not in every one's power, and consequently cannot be his duty. But thanks are a tribute payable by the poorest. There is none so needy, but he hath an heart to be sensible of, and a tongue to express its sense of a benefit received.

The whole world is maintained by an intercourse of good offices; and the whole course of nature is, as it were, a great exchange, in which one good turn is, and ought to be, the stated price of another.

If we consider the universe as one body, we shall find society and conversation to supply the office of the blood and spirits; and it is gratitude that makes them circulate.

If we look over the whole creation, we shall see, that the band or cement that holds together all the parts of this great and glorious fabric, is gratitude, or a mutual intercourse of offices.

Gratitude is the great spring that sets all the wheels of nature a going; and the whole universe is supported by giving and returning, by commerce and intercourse.

And therefore the ungrateful person is a blemish to mankind, and a reproach to the whole creation. He is an exception from all the visible world. Neither the heavens above, nor the earth beneath, afford any thing like him. And therefore, if he will find his equal, he must even go

to

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 211

to hell; for that is the proper place, and at the same time an emblem, of ingratitude: For besides himself, there is nothing but hell, which is always receiving, and never restoring.

ONE principal source of this vice is *ill-nature*. Man being a creature designed and framed by nature, for society and conversation; such a temper or disposition of mind, as inclines him to those actions that promote society and mutual fellowship, is properly called *good-nature*: Which actions, though almost innumerable in their particulars, yet seem reducible in general to two principles of action; first, a proneness to do good to others; and, in the next place, a ready sense of any good done by others. And where these two meet together (as they are scarce ever found asunder) it is impossible for that person, not to be kind, beneficial, and obliging, to all whom he converses with.

On the contrary, *ill-nature* is such a disposition, as inclines a man to those actions that thwart, and sour, and disturb

conversation between man and man; and accordingly consists of two qualities, directly contrary to the former: Namely, a proneness to do ill turns, and an insensibility of any good done to him by others; I mean, not that he is insensible of the good itself; but that, although he finds, feels, and enjoys the good that is done to him, yet he is wholly insensible, and unconcerned, to value or take notice of the kindness of him that doth it.

Now either of these ill qualities, and much more both of them together, do denominate a person ill-natured; they being such as make him grievous and uneasy, to all whom he deals and associates himself with.

No man ever goes sharer with the ungrateful person. Be he never so full, he never runs over: but, like Gideon's fleece, which we read of in the next chapter but one before my text, though filled and replenished with the dew of heaven himself, yet he leaves all dry and empty about him.

ANOTHER principle of this vice is *pride*. The original ground of man's obligation to gratitude,

gratitude, was from this; that each man has but a limited right to the good things of the world; and that the natural allowed way, by which he is to compass the possession of these things, is by his own industrious acquisition of them: and consequently when any good is dealt forth to him, any *other* way than by his own labour, he is accountable to the person who dealt it to him, as for a thing to which he had no right or claim, by any action of his own intitling him to it.—But now, pride shuts a man's eyes against all this, and so fills him with an opinion of his own transcendent worth, that he imagines himself to have a right to all things; as well those that are the effects and fruits of other men's labours, as of his own.

So that, if any advantage accrues to him, by the liberality and kindness of his neighbour; he looks not upon it as a matter of free, undeserved gift: but rather, as a just homage to that worth and merit, which he conceives to be in himself, and to which all the world ought to become tributary.

Upon which consideration, it is no wonder, if he reckons himself wholly unconcerned, to acknowledge, or repay, any good that he receives. For while the courteous person thinks that he is obliging, and doing such an one a kindness; the proud person, on the other side, accounts him to be only paying a debt.

Now this is the true account of the most inward movings and reasonings of the very heart and soul of an ungrateful person. So that we may rest upon this, as a proposition of an eternal, never failing truth, that there neither is, nor ever was any person remarkably ungrateful, who was not also insufferably proud; nor, on the other hand, any one proud, who was not equally ungrateful.

In short, ingratitude is too base to return a kindness, and too proud to regard it: much like the tops of mountains, barren indeed, but yet lofty; they produce nothing, they feed nobody, they cloath nobody, yet are high and stately, and look down upon all the world about them.

ANOTHER

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 215

ANOTHER principle of ingratitude, is *hard-heartedness*, or *want of compassion*. For the nature of ingratitude, being founded in such a disposition, as incloses all a man's concerns within himself, and consequently gives him a perfect unconcernedness, in all things which do not immediately relate to his own interest; it is no wonder, if the same temper of mind, which makes a man unapprehensive of any good done to him by others, makes him equally unapprehensive and insensible of any evil or misery suffered by others.

In truth, it is impossible for a man to be perfect and thorough-paced in ingratitude, till he has shaken off all fetters of pity and compassion: for all relenting and tenderness of heart is an enemy to ingratitude, and checks the growth of it.

Ingratitude and compassion never cohabit in the same breast. And this shews the exceeding malignity of this vice, and the baseness of the mind in which it dwells. For we may with the greatest truth affirm, that since there was such a thing as mankind in the world, there never was any

heart truly great and generous, that was not also tender and compassionate.

HAVING thus therefore shewn the nature and malignity of this vice, I shall only deduce an inference or two from the whole, and so conclude.

AND, first, from what hath been said we may infer, that to endeavour to contract *friendship* with an ungrateful person, is not a thing very desirable to a wise man.

Friendship consists properly in mutual offices, and a generous strife in mutual acts of kindness. But he who doth a kindness to an ungrateful person, is like the sower in the parable, whose seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choaked it.

The ungrateful person is the only thing in nature, for which no one living is the better. He lives to himself, and subsists by the good-nature of others, of which he himself hath not the least grain. He is a mere incroachment upon society, and
confe-

SERM. XII. *Baseness of Ingratitude.* 217

consequently hath no right to the common benefits of it.

SECONDLY: As a man, tolerably discreet, will by no means attempt the making such an one his friend; so neither will he expect to *alter the humour of an ungrateful person, by any acts of kindness.*

The greatest favours to such an one are but like the motion of a ship upon the waves; they leave no trace or sign behind them; they neither soften, nor win upon him; they neither melt nor endear him; but leave him as hard, as rugged, and as unconcerned as ever.

All kindneses descend upon such a temper, as showers of rain, or rivers of fresh water, falling into the main sea: The sea swallows them all, but is not at all changed or sweetened thereby.

LASTLY: Wheresoever we see a man remarkably ungrateful, we may assuredly infer from thence, that *there is no true sense of religion in that person.*

St.

St. John says, *he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* Even so, if a man hath no sense of those kindneses that pass upon him, from one like himself, whom he sees and knows, and converseth with by his outward senses; how much less shall his heart be affected with *God's* kindneses, whom he converseth with only by imperfect speculations, by the discourses of reason, or by the discoveries of faith; none of which do equal the quick and lively impressions of his bodily senses.

Wherefore let us not think to put God off altogether, by frequenting the publick exercises of religion, whilst our brother hath an action against us in the court of heaven; but rather, as our Saviour adviseth, let us *leave our gift upon the altar*, and first go and clear accounts with our brother, and then come and offer our service.

So will God accept our devotions, and will favour us with the graces of his holy spirit in this life, and finally bring us into life eternal.

S E R M O N XIII.

Caution against Hypocrisy.

[From Dr. OWTRAM.]

LUKE XII. 1. latter part.

—*Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

IT is not unusual to find such things as are very different each from other sometimes compared to the same thing: Either because this same thing may have several qualities answering to those different things; or else, because the things that otherwise greatly differ each from other may yet possibly have some one thing equally common amongst themselves.

Upon this account, we find the very kingdom of God, that is, the gospel of our Lord (which is the doctrine of that kingdom),

kingdom), compared to *leaven* in the scriptures.

So we find it, *Luke xiii. 20, 21. Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.* Where the gospel is compared to leaven, because as a little lump of this spreads itself through the whole mass, wherewith it is mingled; so did the gospel of our Lord (as it is here foretold it should) propagate and diffuse itself from small beginnings, amongst the Jews, far and wide, through other nations.

On the other hand, we also find that the doctrine and hypocrisy of the Pharisees are by our Lord compared to leaven; and that, not only as apt to spread and diffuse themselves as that doth, but also as swelling the minds of men with pride and bitterness, as that sours and swells the lump it is mixed withal. Insomuch that the prohibition of leaven in the paschal feast was made a symbol in the law of the mortification of those vices. And this the apostle alludes unto, *1 Cor. v. 8. Let us keep the feast,*

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 221

feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The doctrine of the Pharisees is styled leaven, *Matt. xii. 16.* And their hypocrisy is so styled, in the words I have now read unto you; *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Now hypocrisy is an affectation of seeming to be what a man is not, in point of piety towards God, or love and charity towards men. It is the counterfeit of religion; an outward shew and appearance of it, without the truth of the thing itself.

And because our Lord bids us *beware* of the leaven or hypocrisy of the Pharisees, it will be requisite to consider in the first place, wherein this hypocrisy of the Pharisees consisted.

Now the instances of Pharisaical hypocrisy seem especially to have been these:

They pretended to a greater holiness and devotion, an exacter knowlege of the law, and an exacter obedience to it, than any other sort of people, yet were no better

better than others were. They made a greater shew of piety; they had a fairer form of godliness, but had no more of the power of it.

St. Paul styles this sect *the strictest sect of their religion*; and tells us, that they were esteemed to *teach and act, according to the perfect manner of the law.*

Our Lord himself brings in the Pharisees, openly boasting a greater piety, a stricter life, an higher righteousness, than any other kind of men. *Two men, says he, went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. Where we find him making a great distinction between himself and other persons, in the very first words he spake to God: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.*

Yet after all, if we observe our Saviour's character of these men, we shall find them so far from being better, that they were worse than other persons; that though they
 professed

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 223

professed they were no extortioners, yet they devoured widows' houses; that they shut up the kingdom of heaven from men; that they neither entered in themselves, nor suffered those that were entering to go in.

They confined all their religion to outward actions, and neglected the purifying of their hearts. And as they placed their righteousness solely in outward actions, so they performed those actions with abundance of outward pomp and shew, that they might be seen and praised of men. They gave alms; but sounded a trumpet before them at the giving of it. They prayed much; but they loved to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets; and this, that they might be seen of men. They fasted also twice in the week; but they disfigured their faces, that they might appear unto men to fast. And thus, as our Lord himself tells us, they did all their works to be seen of men, which is the nature of hypocrisy, and a certain signification of it.

SUCH

SUCH being the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, I proceed to give an account of this precept of our Saviour, which bids us beware of it: *Beware, says he, of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

In discoursing whereupon, I shall

I. Shew the *greatness* of this sin of hypocrisy, which we are here commanded to avoid.

II. I shall shew the *diligence* that must be used, if we would duly obey this precept.

I. I propose to shew the *greatness* of this sin of hypocrisy, which we are here commanded to avoid.

In order to which it is to be considered, that hypocrisy falls exceeding short of the very thing it pretends unto; namely, of being true religion; for it is no more than the shadow of it. Hypocrisy pretends to the very height of all piety, but is no more than a poor mean appearance of it.

It wholly consists in outward actions and omissions. It performs the acts that seem most plausible unto men, and avoids those

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 225

those that are most scandalous and expensive; but all this while neglects the purifying of the heart. It disguises the evil within, but doth not reform it. It gilds and paints the outward man, but doth not produce a new life, or a better nature in the heart. It doth not mortify any one sin. It doth not quicken any grace; nor doth it reach the design and end of christianity, which is, to reform and change our nature, and form the image of Christ in us, which is in righteousness and true holiness.

And it doth not only fall short of true religion, but it is a great abuse and derision of it, and even of God himself.

Hypocrisy is insolence against God, but fear and meekness towards men. It is an irreverence towards him that searches and knows the hearts of men, and awe and reverence towards men, who can but observe our outward actions. It is a contempt of God, who clearly discerns the thoughts of the heart, and an homage unto men, who have no further knowlege of them, than as they appear in outward actions;

VOL. I.

Q

which

which is a great affront to God, and an equal abuse of true religion.

And there is yet a further abuse that hypocrisy offers to religion, which lies in the use of the name, and title, and shew of it, in order to base and unworthy ends; which is, to pervert the very nature and order of things, and of God's designs and institutions; to turn the end into the means, and the means into the principal end.

Religion, according to God's appointment, is to be preferred before any secular ends and profits; to be the chief in all our aims; and so be propagated and promoted by all the talents that God hath given us.

But, what is the nature, what is the custom of hypocrisy? It is to debase and depress religion, to the service of secular gain and honour; it is to use the appearance of it, in prejudice of the thing itself, and to make a shew and fair appearance of piety, virtue, and integrity, to supplant these very things themselves. This is the nature of hypocrisy.

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 227

If the hypocrite would effectually cheat his neighbour, if he would put a deceit upon him, he pretends to piety and religion; he censures the lives and manners of others; he complains against the iniquity of the times, that so he may the better impose upon him, gain his credit, and then deceive him.

If he would prefer and advance himself, intrude into places of power and profit, and thrust out those possessed of them; he presently inveighs against those persons; he pretends religion in so doing, pretends reformation of abuses, makes the very highest profession of truth, and justice, and integrity.

If he would gratify animosity, and revenge himself upon his neighbour: Here he pretends religion again; here his conscience is engaged; he is concerned for the public good, which is a thing he pretends he will never forsake or quit, whatever it cost him to pursue it.

If he would disturb the public peace, create sedition and confusion; if he would overthrow the government, and change its laws and constitutions; if he would destroy

religion itself, religion must be pretended for it.

Such is the nature of hypocrisy, which is the evil we are here commanded to avoid.

I proceed now to the

second thing suggested to us in my text, namely, the *diligence* that must be used, if we will duly observe the precept; intimated to us in the word *beware*. Which shews it is no such easy thing to avoid all pharisaism and hypocrisy, as we may perhaps imagine it is.

And for the clearing of this point, I shall desire you to observe, that an appearance of religion, or a religion in outward shew, void of the true spirit of it, is apt to recommend itself, and strangely to impose on men as a religion which is *easy*.

It is a very easy thing to make an outward shew of piety, while the sin at the same time is suffered to dwell within. And men naturally love their ease, and are ready to content themselves with that which hath a fair resemblance of religion, and which is favourable to their vices, and to love and embrace it on that account.

Men

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 229

Men never quarrel with religion, till it offers violence to their sins. It is never difficult, till it require them to subdue and mortify their vices. Here it is that they forsake it, and cast it off, when it grows pressing and importunate, in contradiction to their appetites.

In the mean time, if it will indulge the vice within; if it will permit pride, and avarice, and animosity, to dwell there, and content itself to paint and gild the outward man; if it will be satisfied with these external shews and actions, which are plausible in the eyes of men, and thwart no secular end and interests, no carnal appetites and inclinations, they are ready enough to entertain it.—Such was the religion of the Pharisees: Such, in truth, is all hypocrisy; and therefore not to be avoided without considerable care and diligence.

And, what is more considerable, the appearance of religion, destitute of the power of it, doth for a time *gain frequently the reputation of true religion*, nay more reputation sometimes than true religion itself obtains, and thereby serves those ends

which men are apt to propound and follow in this world.

The hypocrite makes it his business to appear in the visible shew of piety; takes care that every religious action appear to the eyes, or come to the knowledge of the world: So did the Pharisees give their alms, so did they order their prayers and fasts, that the world might observe and understand them. Whereas the sincere and true Christian thinks it enough to approve himself to God in private, and takes no thought how to commend himself to man, farther than by avoiding scandal, and by a true and unaffected discharge of duty to God and man; without the circumstance of pomp and shew, or of much appearance in so doing.

The hypocrite pretends to the very height of piety, to the greatest measures of perfection: The upright man pretends no more than he hath already attained to.

The hypocrite makes it his great business to be always speaking of religion, in every place, in every company, at all times, upon all occasions, though they be never so unseasonable: The upright person

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 231

contents himself to give religion its due place, to take convenient opportunities to mention, propagate, and promote it.

The hypocrite makes it his design to shew a singular zeal and fervour for the smallest things that relate to religion, nay things of no concernment in it: The upright person is more modest; lays no more of stress on things than the laws of God or men require.

By all which means it comes to pass, that the reputation of the hypocrite sometimes far exceeds that of true, and wise, and sober Christians; which as it may press a strong temptation to infatuate and draw men to that sin, so it should move us to the greater watchfulness, and the greater diligence to avoid it.

Moreover: As hypocrisy often gains the credit of true religion, nay more than itself can gain in the general blindness of mankind, so doth it sometimes effectually serve a man's *secular ends and interests*, even beyond real piety.

Now that which gives it this advantage for these ends, at least for a certain space of time, until it be discovered and detected, is, because it gives a man the licence of using such methods for his end, as no man truly conscientious can possibly allow himself to use. It gives him leave to say or do whatsoever it be that may serve his end. It gives him leave to promise fair to every person, although he never design performance; to fill men with infinite expectations of public good, or their own advantage, though nothing of these things be intended. It gives him leave to apply himself to every man's humour and desire; to flatter the proud, to praise the ambitious, to bribe the covetous, to serve every man's vices, and to accommodate such a bait for every person, as is most pleasing to his appetite. By all which means, it often effectually serves its ends, before it can be well discovered; and then discovery doth not hurt it. It hath gained the advantages it designed, and (it may be) the reputation of *wisdom*, though it hath lost that of *piety*.

Now,

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 233

Now, seeing hypocrisy is so easy a kind of religion, grateful in several instances to the sinful passions of mankind, being apt to serve the several ends of gaining applause, and wealth, and power, it will require a singular care, a great watchfulness over ourselves, to avoid it in all degrees and measures, and to be infected with nothing of it. It will require the more of this, because a man may be an hypocrite, and yet not be aware he is so; he may be infected with this disease, and that in a very high degree, and not be sensible of his malady, not feel and observe it in himself.

It is clear, that the very Pharisees themselves were not aware of their own hypocrisies. Had they been so, they could not have *trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and have despised others*; which Christ expressly says they did. Had they been conscious of their hypocrisies, though they might have boasted this their righteousness before men, who did not understand their hearts; they could not have
done

done it before God, who, as they knew, did understand them; and yet our Saviour brings in the Pharisee, boasting of his righteousness before God. But they were not conscious to themselves of their own hypocrisies. And this is the reason why our Lord so often upbraided them with their blindness.—Interest is a subtle thing; it easily insinuates into men's counsels; easily slides into their designs; and moulds them into a form of godliness; and begets an appearance of religion, when they are little aware of it. *The heart is deceitful above all things* (saith the prophet), *and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

Which things, then, being so, if we will avoid so fly a vice, if we would exclude so subtle and so deceitful a sin, it will concern us, in the first place, *to avoid the several causes of it*, pride, and avarice, and ambition. For we may lay this down for a certain rule, that hypocrisy is no solitary vice. It is never found alone in any man. It always serves some other sin. It always ministers to some superior vice within

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 235

within; that is to say, either to the love of the praise of men, or that of secular wealth and power. If a man design not to serve these ends, if these do not bear any sway in him, he is in no danger of hypocrisy; for that is a vice which always ministers to some other, and these are the vices which it serves.

And then further: It will secure us from hypocrisy, if we will fully content ourselves with those advantages of religion, which God hath certainly promised to it; peace with him, peace of conscience in this world, and eternal happiness in the other. I know very well, that true religion doth often contribute to further ends; namely, both to welfare and reputation in this world, as well as the other. But because there are certain times and circumstances, wherein it will not serve those ends, wherein the best and wisest men shall be esteemed the very worst, superstitious, cold, and formal men, by those that are zealous in some faction, and know no religion but that zeal; because such

times

times as these may be, it is safest to content ourselves in gaining those rewards and blessings that are peculiar to religion, the testimony of a good conscience, and life eternal in the world to come.

And then, lastly: Because hypocrisy is so deceitful and sly a sin, as always serving worldly interest, which is apt insensibly to blind the eyes, and infatuate the minds of the wisest men, and yet hide it from themselves, it will concern us, to be very frequent and impartial in the *examination* of ourselves, to weigh our counsels, to try our ends, to prove our designs, in every action relating any way to religion. It will be needful to consider, whether we indeed design it, and do really intend to promote and practise it, wherever we make a profession of it. And then, because God alone knows the heart, and because his grace is most needful to discover ourselves unto ourselves, in the midst of the many sins and passions that may infatuate and beguile us; let us earnestly pray for his holy spirit to deliver us from all the infatuations,

SERM. XIII. *Caution against Hypocrisy.* 237

ations, and all the seductions of our evil desires. Let us make the address which David did unto God: *Try me, O Lord, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

[From Mr. H. T. WELLS'S Sermon, preached at the Anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in the City of New York, on the 10th of May, 1794.]

ISAIAH XXXVIII.

VERY person who comes into the world under the guilt of sin is a debtor to death. And this debt, though not paid, will pay itself, who have themselves about with the strongest reason, or being no richer as they were always to possess them, or what they had in the world, or how all thought of death in the world, of night and day, and in the midst of all their care and labour, to avoid this, death, and punishment, and to keep all their joy and glory, and to continue when they have expected them.

S E R M O N XIV.

Behaviour in Sickneſs.

[From Mr. KETTLEWELL's Death made comfortable.]

ISAIAH XXXVIII. 1.

—*Set thine houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live.*

EVERY perſon who comes into this world under the guilt of fin is a debtor to death. And this debt, ſooner or later, all muſt pay; even they, who fence themſelves about with the ſtrongeſt armies, or heap up riches as if they were always to poſſeſs them, or whoſe daily buſineſs it is to drown all thoughts of death in the noiſe of mirth and pleaſures.

In the miſt of all their care and labour to avoid him, Death will ſurely meet them, and ſpoil all their glory and jollity, and oftentimes when they leaſt expect him;
and

SERM. XIV. *Behaviour in Sickness.* 239

and then he makes them see their own vanity, and the vanity of all earthly things, which nothing else could teach them to consider of.

For he shews us the shame of our bodies, and makes the pride of human greatness to become an easy conquest and inglorious prey for worms, and brings all earthly hopes and projects to end and hide themselves in dust.

This is a thing which all men know, and all men fear. And they who study most to keep the thoughts of death far from them, do yet certainly know that it will come.

And happy then is he, whose mind is so well prepared and fortified, that it can neither fright nor hurt him, who hath disarmed this king of terrors, and made this great enemy of nature to become a friend.

All *this* religion will do, if we will make a right use of it; for the sting of death is sin, and true repentance takes that out. And if we take care that our life contain nothing terrifying, our death need not. And the completest victory over death

death is eternal life; and the same repentance secures us thereof. And trust in God fortifies us against fear, and patience makes our pains lighter; so that, whilst by true devotion we are spending ourselves in these exercises, we are dressing our souls in armour, which will not only sustain the shock of death, but conquer it with all its strength and terror.

And my business at this time shall be to furnish our thoughts with suitable considerations, whereby all this may be done; and whereby we may receive sickness and meet death, so as at the same time to have enough under them to support and comfort us, and in the end to be made better by both.

And this is the way, according to the expression in my text, *to set our house in order*, against the time shall come that we must die.

WHEN God arrests us with sickness, it is time then most particularly to think of leaving this world:—not that every man who falls sick must presently give up himself

SERM. XIV. *Behaviour in Sickness.* 241

self for dead, but because sickness puts life in hazard, and brings a man to resign himself into the hands of God, whether he shall die thereof or no.

To think of leaving this world is not only profitable, but needful, at *all* times; for the great business we have to do here is to prepare for an happy departure. And if we do not think of it, we are like to be very ill prepared for it. In our days of *health* and *pleasure*, we must call these thoughts to us; but when *sickness* comes, it calls *us* to *them*, and naturally imprints them in our minds. And it is our truest wisdom to entertain them at such times; for if we die, we shall all judge it was the best way we had to employ our thoughts, and that of all things death should not be met unthought of. And they render us fitter to live, if God spare us; they make death safer, but do not hasten or bring it sooner, and are no hindrance to our living longer, but a great help, if we recover, to our living better.

In this preparation to leave the world, it concerns us to separate ourselves from

VOL. I. R worldly

worldly cares and incumbrances of business. We should look upon ourselves as called off from the conduct of these matters, to the giving a strict account of them; and as having work enough cut out for our thoughts and care, to take a decent leave of this world, and to trim our lamps, and prepare our souls for a better.

Our business then is, how to meet death with most safety and comfort to ourselves, if we happen to die of that sickness; and to commit no errors therein, because we are to die but once, and cannot afterwards amend them. The work and worldly cares of life are to be left to those who think of living; but how to die is the business that then lies before us.

AND the first thing we should do should be, *to finish our repentance*.—And in order thereunto we should carefully review all our past life, and the present frame and habit of our mind, and diligently observe what is good in either, and with all humility thank God for it, and take comfort in it; and also what is amiss in either, and

work

SERM. XIV. *Behaviour in Sickness.* 243

work ourselves up into true contrition for it, affectionately bewailing therein our extreme folly and unworthiness.

And we should fix holy, deliberate, and unreserved purposes, against all our former offences:

And make all due and reasonable satisfaction for all wrongs done by us to any persons, by any ways:

And take care of the payment of all our just debts:

And seek reconciliation where we have given any just offence:

And forgive those who have injured or disobliged us:

And finish any good designs, which we had laid in our health, and would not lose the reward thereof, by having them dropt at our death.

And in these ways of expiating sins, we should earnestly beg God's pardon, and comfortably hope for the same, through the merits of our blessed Redeemer.

AND after we have taken this first and chief care for our souls, to make our peace for past or present offences, our next care

should be, to keep from *falling into any new offences*; lest, under the burden of a sick body, our souls should (as it were) fall sick too; as they will do, if we grow secure and careless of duty, or regardless of mercies, or greedy of life, and find no relish in prayer, or in meditation upon another world, and fall into impatience, and are fretted with fleshly cares and worldly desires; all which shew our spirits to be more distempered, and more dangerously ill than our bodies are.

To prevent this, our next care should be to order our carriage under sickness, and to sustain the pain and weakness of it, with an *intire trust in God*. The accidents and uneasiness of our sickness will still alarm our fears, and try our faith; and it must be our care to shew no anxious or distracted thoughts under them.

But as often as any accidents or prospects terrify us, let us remember that they are all in God's hands, and shall have such end only as he pleases: That he who sends them will take care they go no further than it is fit they should, and will turn
them

SERM. XIV. *Behaviour in Sicknefs.* 245

them to the best at laſt: That we are ſafer and better in God's keeping and ordering, than we could be in our own; and therefore may lay aſide all painful and miſtruſtful cares for ourſelves, as knowing under all that happens, how ſure we are to be taken care of.

And when we feel much ſorrow and many difficulties, and may fear and foreſee worſe, we ought nevertheless meekly to receive all our ſorrows and dangers, becauſe God ſends them; and they ought not to terrify us, becauſe he governs them. We are ſure that he conſiders all that lies upon us, and will turn it unto good: That he conſiders how much we can bear, and will in tender mercy take off the reſt: that he conſiders what ſtrength we have to bear, and will graciously ſupply us with what is wanting: that he conſiders how long we can bear, and will give us eaſe at the fitteſt ſeaſon.

And ſince he will eaſe us in his due time, and ſupport us till he eaſeth us, we ſhould not grow weary, nor faint in our mind, but wait with patience till our eaſe comes.

Though we walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, we ſhould fear no evil; for he is with us, his rod and his ſtaff comfort us. Yea, though he ſlay us, yet ought we to truſt in him, and have hope even in our death, to find everlaſting reſt and joy after death.

If it troubles us to leave our friends or family perhaps meanly provided for, let us conſider, that God ſeeth this as well as we, and yet he thinks fit to call us away from them; and this may make it plain to us, that God himſelf, who is more wiſely careful for them than we can be, has a mind to be truſted with them. And therefore let us reckon to ſet them all ſafe by recommending them to him, as our departing Lord provided for his diſconſolate and deſtitute diſciples, by recommending them to his heavenly father, and praying to him for them.

And let us remember alſo, that this is truly to leave all, to come to God, if we can find in our heart to go forth readily, when all theſe call upon us to ſtay.

And

And therefore let us truſt God, as with ourſelves, ſo with our neareſt relations, and with our friends, and with all that depend on us.

Let us truſt them with him, in full aſſurance that there is no way to make them happy and ſafe, like putting them into his hands.

Let us truſt them with him, becauſe he is the huſband of the widow, and the father of the fatherleſs, and hath promiſed to take care of them.

And though we know not what they will do, or how they will be cared for, when we are gone, yet we know he doth, and will order all things kindly both for us and them.

We leave them not deſtitute, for he is with them, and his care is the beſt guardian, and his bleſſing is the richeſt portion.

And he will have infinitely a more watchful care of them, and can do infinitely more for them, than we can.

Upon all which accounts, we ought to commit them reſignedly to his care.

THE next duty incumbent on us in these circumstances is, *resignation to the will of God*.—And this will be easy after the former; for there is no difficulty in giving up ourselves to God, if we dare trust him. And we shall not only be contented, but desirous, to quit our own wills for his, if we are persuaded that his is better for us, and that our true interest and happiness is safer lodged, and may be infinitely better trusted with him, than with ourselves. And if we have no will to be under what he orders, it is a plain sign, that we do not apprehend ourselves safe in his hands, but think we should be better in our own.

Let us therefore, amidst all our pains and perils, freely give up ourselves into God's hands, and be glad and thankful that we can lodge ourselves there.

For we know that we cannot be in better hands than his, and therefore should not wish to be in any other; especially not in our own, nor to be the carvers of our own condition.

Therefore

Therefore let God's will be done; for it is always a most blessed and beneficial will to those that fear him. It sends mercies at the fittest time, and sends troubles when they have most need of them, and takes them off again, when it is fittest to remove them.

If it causes present sorrow and smart, it is to do them good; and if they do not see how it should turn to their good, yet he doth, and will make them see it in the end.

Our wills are too often guided by folly, but his is always and altogether wise, and hath ever been most gracious and full of mercy towards us.

He knoweth best when it was fit for us to come into this world, and when it is fit for us to leave it; and what part is fittest for us to bear, whilst we stay here. Let him therefore chuse our condition, and let our lot be what pleaseth him; only let us be careful faithfully and wisely to discharge the duties of that condition, and let our carriage under it be such, as may be acceptable unto him.

We

We may desire, no doubt, what seemeth good and pleasing unto us. Yea, when our pains and distresses are extreme, we may desire it earnestly. But when we desire it, we ought not to prescribe unto God, but beg that he would order therein, not what our weakness wisheth, unless his wisdom also sees it fitting. And he is always ready to grant our desires, if they be really for our good and his glory, and agree with the wise ends of his providence; and we should desire them no longer, if he sees they are otherwise.—It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.

Moreover; we should compose ourselves upon such occasions to bear our afflictions with *thankfulness*. We must not think it strange; or that things are strained too high, when we are called upon even to be *thankful* under sickness or other calamity. For the difference between thankful and unthankful or complaining natures, lies more in their spirits than in their outward circumstances. A thankful spirit will find enough to give God thanks for, in sickness

or any other affliction. And an unthankful spirit will never want matter enough to complain of in a better condition. And if any afflicted, or sick persons, are unthankful, it is not because they want mercy's good store which deserve their thanks, but because they overlook them.

This virtue of thankfulness to God, as it is one of the most necessary duties, so it is one of the liveliest beauties, and brightest ornaments of a sick bed; for it speaks true humility, when we shew, as we do thereby, that the least mercies deserve our thanks, and that the worst states which God puts us into are too good for us. And it expresseth intire good-will and love to God, when we can love and praise him, even whilst he corrects and smites us; and take notice of all his kindnesses, in the midst of our afflictions; and place an implicit belief and confidence in his love, that by all these sorrows he is doing us good, and deserves our thanks, though in our weak reason we are not able to see the good which is to accrue to us thereby.—And above all, let

us

us conſider this moſt certain truth, that whatever we ſuffer, it is infinitely leſs than we deſerve.

THE laſt virtue that I ſhall mention, wherewith the ſick perſon ought to bear his ſorrows, is *patience*. In ſhort, the whole courſe of ſickneſs is a trial of patience; and when it is tried thereby, we ought to give good proof of it, or elſe we can never act our part tolerably, nor approve ourſelves as we ought to do.

And if we have the forementioned virtues, we ſhall have patience; for if we dare *truſt* God, our fears of pain, or other evil accidents, will not make us unquiet. If our wills are *reſigned* to his, we ſhall not be unwilling to bear what he ſends, but meet our ſorrows with humble and contented ſubmiſſion, inſtead of angry and uneaſy repining. If we are *thankful* to him under our ſickneſs, we ſhall bleſs him for what we have, and not diſcontentedly complain for what we want, and thank him becauſe he once gave, inſtead of accuſing him becauſe he has now taken away.

And

And therefore when God calls any person to be sick, let him look on patience as the proper virtue of his state, and make it his care at every turn to arm his soul with it. Let him set himself to support his pains and weakness with gravity and composedness, keeping back from all passionate, and from all light and vain words; and to bear all, out of submission and resignation to the will of God, quietly suffering, because he sends them.

And let him remember always to humble himself under the hand that smites him, and own it is just; and to receive the strokes with quietness, and suffer without striving, and bear them without uneasy complaints of them, and wait on God without fainting, and not sink under his load, but support and stay himself upon God, till his time comes to send ease.

If we be ready to think or say we can no longer bear, let us remember that God knows that better than we; and that when we can bear no longer, God will inflict no longer.

And

And who can say, how much, or how long, God's grace shall enable a man to bear?

And the same grace that did enable him to bear it yesterday is as powerful and as ready now to enable him to bear as much again to-day.

Yea, and till we are tried, we none of us know what, or how long, we can bear.

And resolution, by God's grace, can bear much; a great deal more, and a great deal longer than we thought of. But if we are irresolute, any thing of trouble is difficult; and any difficulty will conquer those, who come prepared, not to bear and strive with it, but to yield.

And to arm us yet more thoroughly with all this patience, which is the virtue most particularly required and marked out, and yet most difficult to be exercised and preserved by us, let us set before our eyes the far greater trials and sufferings of the ever blessed Son of God.

Let

SERM. XIV. *Behaviour in Sickness.* 455

Let us think within ourselves, that it is not for us to accuse God for suffering our patience to be tried, when he could thus suffer his patience to be tried: That we are not to think much at suffering trials deservedly, and for ourselves; when he refused not to suffer infinitely greater, without having deserved to suffer any thing himself, but merely in pity and kindness for others, yea for his enemies; and lastly, that if our present pains are sad, yet they are as nothing in comparison of the infinite pains of hell.

THESE are the duties particularly requisite in the days of sickness; and yet they should not be neglected or thrown aside by men in health, as if they were a study and employment *only* for sick-beds; for living men must think of death, and prepare for it, as well as dying. And if whilst health and strength lasts, we throw these thoughts and preparations by, when it comes, it will be like to find us unready; and then we can neither die comfortably nor safely.

Indeed,

Indeed, repentance and reconciliation, and ſatisfaction for injuries, and the like, are a work moſt fit and proper for the days of life; and truſt in God, and reſignation, and thankfulneſs, and patience (the great virtue and employment of ſick-beds), are all duties, as neceſſary and acceptable in health, as they are in ſickneſs. Death itſelf is but the laſt act and end of life. And thoſe ſpiritual exerciſes, which make us at laſt to die well and happily, are but the laſt acts of thoſe duties, which had made us live piously and virtuously before.

I ſhall conclude all with thoſe words of the wiſe ſon of Sirach: *Defer not until death to be juſtified. Humble thyſelf before thou be ſick; and in the time of ſins ſhew repentance. Before judgment examine thyſelf, and in the day of viſitation thou ſhalt find mercy.*

S E R M O N XV.

Of the Nature of Humility.

[From DR. FALLING on Humility.]

1 PET. V. 5.

Be clothed with humility: For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

THESE words represent to our consideration, a virtue, which is in a manner proper and peculiar to the christian religion: that is to say, *humility*, or *lowliness of heart*: A virtue, to which even the wisest of the ancient heathens were for the most part strangers; for though they discoursed well against *pride*, and of the unreasonableness and folly of it, yet they were to seek, as to the notion and nature, and especially as to the *practice*, of *humility*.

They spake many good things of sobriety, modesty, and moderation of mind; and of the government of men's desires; which may be applied to this virtue by way of ac-

commodation; but they did never hit rightly upon this most amiable perfection, humility.

They understood by humility, an abject mind, weakness and littleness of spirit, pusillanimity; a servile, slavish, and cowardly disposition; a degenerate and mean temper; a low, sordid spirit, that sinks presently, when a man meets with any calamity or disappointment; a pitiful, sneaking mind, that upon any discouragements makes a man to apostatize from himself, to fall from his constancy, and behave himself after such a poor manner, as is unbecoming a wise man.

These are wrong notions of humility; and the reason was, because they did not well understand the virtue itself; and, perhaps, were not very *willing* to understand it; because they themselves were guilty of an epide-mical vice, to which it stands in direct opposition.

It was our blessed Saviour, who first truly taught this virtue in the gospel. He did in his own person give the world a most lively idea of humility; and hath made the practice of it, the distinguished mark

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 259

mark of his own true disciples. So that he is not of Christ, who hath not, as he had, an humble mind; He may be a philosopher, but he cannot be a christian.

To this purpose it is observable, where the apostle in my text bids us to be *cloathed* with humility, that the original word which we render *cloathed*, signifies a servile habit, a short little garment, white but very coarse, that the meanest servants were formerly wont to wear about their shoulders, as a particular token of their poor and low condition; a mark of their servitude, like a badge or a livery, to distinguish them from others.

Thus the allusion is very elegant, and the sense plain; namely, that humility is the peculiar note of Christ's servants; a far better ornament, than the philosopher's robe, under which an haughty mind was wont to be concealed; the true livery of a christian indeed; the badge of those that belong to the Lord Jesus, how despicable soever it may appear to the men of this world; the distinguishing mark of such as serve him, who took upon himself the form of a servant, and came into the world, not to be

S 2

ministered

ministered unto; but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

In discoursing upon this subject, I shall make it my endeavour, at this time, to lay open, and explain the true nature of this duty, and to shew, wherein it doth most peculiarly consist.

Now humility, in short, is this: *It is a modest and slender opinion of ourselves, whatever our endowments, or our circumstances are.*

THE proper seat of humility is in the mind. A lowly heart, an humble soul; that is the thing which God values. He looketh not, as we poor creatures do, at things outward. He judgeth not of men according to appearance; by dejected countenances; by lamentable looks; by a sordid or homely dress; no, nor by those semblances of humility which some express, when they call themselves the greatest of sinners, the vilest people, and by a great many other hard names, which they will not endure their neighbours to give them.

For all these outward semblances and shews of humility, may very easily consist with

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 261

with a conceited and proud mind. An haughty spirit may be hid under such disguises. All this may be nothing but a sort of ostentation; an art of gaining esteem and applause; the effect of pride, and a means of serving the ends of it; the professions and formalities of profligate hypocrites.

The hidden man of the heart, is the true ornament. Humility is that of the spirit; *the casting down of imaginations* (as the apostle expresseth it), *and of every high thing that exalteth itself against God, and the bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

Pride is properly a lifting up of the mind, an high and lofty concert; the sin of the devil; and the original cause of those mischiefs, which have made the world miserable, since the devil infected our first parents with the disease. And the office of this virtue, humility, is to cure and clear all our minds from the contagion; to bring us, by methods of mortification, to a right opinion of our own selves; and to lay us low in our own thoughts, under a due sense of what we really are.

THIS opinion of ourselves therefore must be very *modest and slender*. For it must needs be very mean, if it be a due estimation of ourselves, no more than what is just and proportionable to our true value, exactly according to our intrinsic worth; I say, it must needs be very mean, when we consider what little reason any man in the world hath to be proud.

I say (says the apostle) *through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Nothing hinders but that a man may esteem himself, provided that his thoughts be fair, and equal; that he esteem himself just as he is, and just as he hath of his own. The sin is, when he rates himself above his real dignity; when he overvalueth his deserts; when he thinks more, and higher, and greater things of himself, than he ought to think.

For so every proud man doth. He enhanceth his own price. He raiseth himself beyond the true standards. His pride

and

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 263

and vanity, his folly and sin, lie in his overweening conceit; in pretending to excellencies which he hath not, and to higher things than he really deserves; in belying himself after a most hateful manner; in fancying and boasting himself to be something very extraordinary; in giving out, and setting himself off to be something, when he is nothing at all; nay, when he is worse than nothing, a miserable, foolish, and very wicked thing of a man; much the more foolish for being proud; and much the more miserable and wicked for being like the devil. *I say therefore* (says the apostle) *to every man among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think "sobriety,"* i. e. according to the measures of humility; to think so as to be modest; not to set up any airy and high-flown conceits, but to draw in their sails, to contract their thoughts, and to shrink them within their due limits and scantling.

THE apostle, in the passage above-mentioned, calls humility by the name of

sobriety; to shew, that proud men have lost their sober senses. They are no longer men of sound understandings and judgment, but things beside themselves; mere toys and fantastical creatures, with their heads all puffed up, as if they had nothing in them but empty and vain imaginations.

There are divers overweening conceits, which plainly argue all proud people to be carried away with vanity and folly: Either, that the things they value themselves upon came not altogether from God, but chiefly, if not solely, from themselves, and are the effects of their own wit and industry;—or, if from God, yet that they were bestowed as a just reward of their singular merits and dignity: That their portion of understanding is much greater than other men's: That they know much better than others, how to enjoy their acquisitions: That in all, or in most respects, they are more excellent than their neighbours; and that hardly any thing can be too much for them, if they can but get it.

And what is all this but wild imagination? Pride without any bottom: Folly, which

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 265

which they themselves could not but be ashamed of, did they seriously and soberly consider from what hand every man of us receives his all; and for what purposes; that all of us are but stewards in our several places and callings; and that the things committed to our trust are no other than debts and burdens; things which we owe, and things that we are accountable for; and things, which men of reason will think as improper for them to value themselves upon, as it is to be proud of incumbrances or poverty.

THEREFORE, to bring our hearts down to a true level, we must be very careful to banish out of our minds all undue and flattering opinions of our own worth, and to reduce ourselves to *David's* temper, where he says, *Lord, I am not high-minded; I have no proud looks; I do not exercise myself in great matters, which are too high for me; but I refrain my soul, and keep it low; like as a "child" that is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child.*

Which

Which brings to mind that method which our blessed Saviour used with his disciples, when they disputed among themselves, which of them should be the greatest. Some of them would have been his chief favourites, the principal officers in that glorious kingdom, upon earth, which they expected he would one day set up. To cure this their ambitious humour, he took up a little child in his arms, and proposed the child to them as an emblem of humility; with this solemn declaration, that very nearly concerneth us all, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

“Men die (saith one of the ancients) in a worse condition than they were born in; because nature did not bring us out of the womb with that pride, and vanity, and ambition of mind, which afterwards becomes the reproach of manhood, and of our riper years.”—Though indeed the seeds of these vices be in us naturally, yet it is our own fault that they grow up with us; and the design of Christ's religion is, to bring our souls to an *infant* state of innocence

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 267

cence and humility, that we may go out of the world *as well* (at least) as we came into it; *children* the second time; children as to all malice, as to all guile, as to all airy and bloating conceits of our own excellencies. We can never be truly humble as we should, and as we must be, in order to our entrance into the kingdom of heaven, till we leave exalting of ourselves above measure.

PRIDE, we may be sure, will keep us out of God's presence; because it would not suffer *angels* themselves to stay in it. Their original sin consisted, in admiring excessively the eminent perfections of their nature, and the glory of their state. Hence followed a state of envy, at the more eminent condition of those orders of angels that were placed above them. This grew into direct enmity against them, and against God himself, the maker and disposer of them all. This enmity increased into open apostacy. And all ended, by God's just judgment, in their final and eternal damnation.

nation. And so, of glorious angels, they became hellish fiends.

Since which time their sole business hath been to propagate their envy, and malice, and apostacy from the father of us all; and so to involve mankind under the same condemnation. But their chief artifice, and that which by their own sad experience they have found to be the surest way, is to hasten our ruin, by propagating their *pride*, i. e. loftiness of opinion, and haughtiness of heart; the first sin that ever was in heaven, and the first sin which those devils brought upon the earth.

So they made our first parents believe, that they should be as Gods, knowing good and evil. And the same sin, which cost those angels their heavenly paradise, did presently cost our parents and us the earthly one. Ambition and self-conceit began the war between God and his creatures. It was made the first example of God's vengeance; and it is that which God will pursue with vengeance to all eternity.

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 469

eternity.—*He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*

This then is true humility, and wisdom also, not to think ourselves to be better or greater than we are, but to rate ourselves according to our just value; which cannot but be very low, if we would but *inquire into ourselves impartially*. But this is one great fault, and the cause of a great many more, that every man is apt to overlook himself, while he prieth narrowly into the state of others. Whereas, did we duly apply our hearts to find out and understand our own condition, our follies, and demerits; the mere vanity of pride would in a little time make the sin ridiculous, and dethrone its dominion, by exposing it to contempt and scorn.

Its credit and prevalency proceeds from our neglects at home, because we are such strangers to our own selves, with whom we should have the closest, and might have the safest intimacy. We still take it for granted, that we really are what we willingly believe ourselves to be. Either we

look

look not into our state at all, or else take a very transient and false view; passing over the discovery of those flaws and humbling ideas, which should have been the principal object; and perhaps fearing too, lest upon a strict examination we should see something to be ashamed of. By this means we scarcely judge so much as by appearance, but bring ourselves into a mistaken reputation with our own over-credulous hearts, and go on in the error, till we are past making righteous judgment, and are quite out of the reach of self-condemnation.

Our first care therefore must be, to have as perfect a knowledge as we can of ourselves; what we are indeed; and what we deserve upon a true estimate. For till the account be just which we take, it will be impossible for us to be delivered from that over-weening opinion, and conceitedness of mind, which is as different a thing from true humility as that Pharisee was from the poor publican, in the 18th chapter of St. Luke: His prayer was all boasting and ostentation; while the other, standing
at

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 271

at a distance, would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner:—This man* (says our Saviour) *went down to his house justified, rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

AND thus, having shewn the nature of this great christian virtue, I shall finish this discourse, by endeavouring to persuade you to do your parts, in making such an use of what hath been said, as may be for your own real good.

To have these things told us is nothing, unless we make a good use of them. And this is no very difficult task, if we will but apply the zeal of honest and religious hearts to do it; which, one would think, should not be wanting, where we are sure beforehand of this advantage, that our labour shall not be in vain.

Necessary indeed it is; absolutely necessary, in order to our everlasting happiness in another world. For we must not be so foolish

foolish as to think, that God will drag us to heaven against our wills; or, that he will give us a portion of bliss there, if we be indisposed and unprepared for it.

The practice of religion and virtue serves to make us meet and fit for what we are to do among saints and angels. And this particular virtue I have been treating of is a principal disposition of soul, that we must carry thither with us.

Besides, no other virtue is or can be more necessary to make us happy in some measure even *here*. It brings with it a kind of heaven upon earth; it is attended with such faith in God, with such submission to his will, and with such dependance upon his truth, mercy, power, and goodness; that a composed and happy state of mind must needs attend it too. So that, by trampling upon this virtue, people do really destroy their own comforts; and whatever proud men think, they have no such enemy as that devil which is in their own breasts. Hence it is, that humility is so often extolled, so often commanded, so often encouraged by various promises

throughout

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 273

throughout the scriptures; because God seeth it to be so infinitely instrumental to our own good.

This renders the consideration the more melancholy and lamentable, that a virtue which would be a common blessing is so great a rarity; for if we take a strict view of those evils which embitter men's lives, and ruin the peace of the world, we shall find, that they all or mostly proceed from an epidemical principle of pride; which gives those sturdy vices both birth and maintenance.

But to be short: There are two things yet to come, which will stain the pride of all human glory; I mean, *death and judgment.*

O death! (says the son of Sirach) *how bitter art thou to a man, that sitteth at ease in his possessions!* And so it must needs be to every vain man, that setteth himself too high. Though for that reason such people think of nothing seldomer than of dropping into the grave, yet it is appointed unto all men once to die. And when that messenger comes to execute its commission, no

274 *Of the Nature of Humility.*

riches can bribe it off, no grandeur can keep it at a distance, nor can any arguments persuade it to use respect. It will strike all with an impartial hand, lay all of us down in our original dust, and there give prince and beggar an equal portion. There no distinction is made between high and low, when once all are laid down. The haughty head, and the strong arm, have there the very same fate with the hand that once hung down, and with the feeble knee; nor doth the worm make any difference betwixt the pampered flesh and that which was wont to be covered with sackcloth. These are mortifying meditations; and such as have a direct tendency to humble us all, would we daily consider whither we are going; what a state we shall all fall into at last; and how we shall be huddled together in one common heap of dust.

But it is no very great matter what becomes here of our *bodies*; they do but go home to their parent. The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the *spirit* returns to God who gave it; to receive its

sentence

SERM. XV. *Of the Nature of Humility.* 275

sentenced at God's hand, according to all it hath done in the body.

The author of the book of Wisdom would have us consider beforehand what the end will be, when the accounts of our sins come to be cast up. *What then will pride profit us, says he; or what good will our riches, with our vaunting, do us?* The sin which at first was with such fury thrown out of heaven, we may be sure will never find any re-admission thither. And therefore it everlastingly concerns us, to cast it away from us in time; because it affects the soul with an utter incapacity of ever appearing in the presence of the humble Jesus.

How light soever men may make of their evil tempers, the end of them must be miserable; nor is there any way of preventing it, but by being new creatures here. It is by acquiring new natures, new dispositions, new qualities and habits, which may make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Of those qualities an humble temper is one, and indeed one of the chief; and

276. *Of the Nature of Humility.*

therefore the promise of a present and a future rest is made more especially to this virtue, by our blessed Saviour himself;—*Learn of me* (says he), *for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

How light is the burden of this virtue, and how great the reward! It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a yoke, but as a crown. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a bribe, but as a wage. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a punishment, but as a discipline. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a gift, but as a debt. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a weight, but as a support. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a prize, but as a possession. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a trial, but as a test. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a reward, but as a reward.

How light is the burden of this virtue, and how great the reward! It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a yoke, but as a crown. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a bribe, but as a wage. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a punishment, but as a discipline. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a gift, but as a debt. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a weight, but as a support. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a prize, but as a possession. It is a burden which is laid upon us, not as a trial, but as a test. It is a reward which is given to us, not as a reward, but as a reward.

S E R M O N XVI.

Loveliness and Reasonableness of Humility.

[From Dr. PELLING on Humility.]

1 PETER III. part of ver. 4.

—*The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

THE apostle in this place, speaking of the outward ornament of the body, takes care (according as is usual with him in other cases) to insinuate something for our spiritual advantage; advising us not to lay out our whole concern in adorning these mortal and corruptible bodies, but to put on something which will recommend us unto the eyes not only of men, but of God;—even *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

AND this leads us to consider the *native beauty and loveliness* of the great Christian virtue of humility or lowliness of spirit, perhaps above the rivalry of any other.

It is one great reproach and infamy of *pride*, that neither God nor man can endure it. Solomon tells us, that there are seven things which God hateth after a more particular manner; *a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness, him that soweth discord among brethren*; but chiefly, and in the first place, *a proud look, or haughty eyes*. And one main reason is, because wherever discord is sown, it is this meddling vice that finds the seed, prepares the soil, and hath an eye upon the harvest. *Only by pride* (says Solomon) *cometh contention*. It is the only fruitful, natural mother, which is continually in travail with that evil, which is so hateful to the God of love and peace.

And for these wretched effects, and for the natural baseness of the vice itself, it is of all others the most hateful to mankind

also; so that though in many cases people generally love communion and society in sin, yet in this they abhor it; for proud wretches are detested by all, and most of all by those who are as proud as they.

But all this while humility carries with it irresistible charms; it is a most graceful virtue, that wins the esteem and affection of every beholder, not excepting the haughty person himself. As it is the most Christian, so it is the most becoming virtue to set any one off. And we may deservedly give it the character, which St. Peter does in my text, that it is *an ornament of great price.*

An humble spirit naturally quickens us to those actions, which affect men with pleasure. It doth not things that are harsh or disobliging; it is not capricious, or scornful; it lieth not upon the catch; it maketh not unjust or severe constructions; it is not an enemy to charity or friendship, nor to any the most homely offices that are good; it is no disturber of another's peace; it is not void of tenderness, or compassion; it needs no allurements, but the love of God and man, to make it stoop; it resents

not every trifle, nor magnifies infirmities beyond their due measure, much less doth it falsify, for reputation or interest.

Hence it is, that every body loves an humble person, because humility is naturally amiable; and the more amiable, because it is attended with many such other graces, as win and endear the hearts of all mankind with a power that is attractive and uncontrollable. Where true humility is, there is meekness, charity, candour, affability, courtesy, gentleness, a serene brow, kind intreatings, and the like; nor is it possible but such graceful endowments must meet with kind entertainment, and be beloved every where.

Before honour (says Solomon) *is humility.* Humility is the certain, ready way to it. Though a good name be far from being his aim or end, yet it will be an humble man's lot, whether he will or no; and, notwithstanding his own desires, or endeavours to the contrary, he becomes popular for the best reasons; for all mankind desire to be well used. It is a principle never to be rooted out of human nature; and

and when they find these their innocent appetites answered, they cannot but love and honour the hand that dealeth so well with them.

BUT this indeed, in comparison, is but a low consideration. Because, we must not seek for honour of men, no more than our Lord Jesus did; nor may we make use of virtue (especially the virtue of humility) as an art for it. Let us therefore go on to consider the great REASONABLENESS of this matter, which will not only invite, but oblige us to the practice of it.

AND here we should consider,—*whence we came;—what we are;—and what we have.*

First, let us consider, *whence we came.* We should reflect upon our originals. The haughtiest man upon earth was once nothing; and the production of every one of us was out of nothing. The being we have we are beholding for it to the power of God, who of his own pleasure raised us out of nothing, that our whole life might
be

be a state of lowliness, the better to dispose us for entire obedience, submission, and resignation of ourselves to his divine will.

Next, Let us consider, *What we are*. The flesh we consist of, and pamper so, what is it but *next* to nothing? A structure of clay and rottenness, a lump provided for worms; an heap of corruption, that as soon as the breath goeth forth, infecteth the air, which we are fain to correct with spices and odours, that industry gathers out of the fields, and are brought us from far, by long and chargeable adventures.

As vile and despicable things as we are, the God of power vouchsafeth to support us. We daily depend upon him. And by *his* law, all his *creatures* are forced to lend us their helping hand; each doing its part for us, according to its kind and capacities; and *all* at the same time upbraiding us with our dependent and beggarly condition.

The *heavens* bestow their light upon us, and put us in mind of that great obscurity, which wrapped us up in our mothers wombs.

wombs. The *earth* under our feet, however we trample upon it, doth the kind office to afford us, first our nursery, and at last our lodging. The thin *air* we breathe in, how soon do we drop to the ground, like untimely fruit, when it is shut out of our nostrils? The *waters* help to quench our thirst, as it helps the wild asses, and other beasts of the field. Poor *animals* and *vegetables* of infinite sorts are fain to be the providers and guardians of our life. Our nakedness is hid by the contribution of dumb creatures, whose backs we are necessitated to strip, that we may cover our own. And all this, for the preservation of that body, which in its best estate is subject to variety of diseases; and which, when death and rottenness hath seized upon it, we ourselves cannot endure the very sight of. Every creature is God's almoner, to relieve and succour us whilst we live in this world; and when we are going out of it, we have nothing to depend on, but his infinite mercies, in whom we now live, and move, and have our being.

Lord,

Lord! what is man? that poor, wretched, contemptible thing, man? What is man,—that he should swell and be bloated with a proud opinion of himself, who can never retire into his own true self, till, like a snail that creeps into its shell, he humbly himself in dust and ashes.

Dust we are, and to dust shall we return. And as for that nobler part of us, *the soul*,—though it be a ray of divinity, a spirit endowed with the powers and faculties of an angel; yet, upon due reflections, it will find more and greater reasons for humility, that may be drawn from within itself, than it sees by viewing its poor and frail habitation.

There are in every one of us two prime faculties, which are co-natural to the soul; a faculty of knowing and reasoning, which is called the *understanding*; and a faculty of acting, a power of chusing or refusing, which is called the *will*: And each of these powers doth minister to us many humbling considerations.

First,

First, for the intellectual faculty, or *understanding*. Though knowlege be a very excellent endowment, that which people generally covet with greediness, and are too apt to value themselves upon; yet Solomon assures us, that *in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowlege increaseth sorrow*: And yet God was pleased of his bounty, to give to *him* an extraordinary portion.

It is not without great toil and trouble of mind, that we get the knowlege we have at last, and even *that* is very little; considerable, only because it costeth us dear; nothing indeed, in comparison of that infinite number of things natural, moral, and divine, which we are ignorant of.

The further we search, the further still we are to seek, and the more sensible of our great wants. And that which we pretend to be masters of is rather conjecture than certainty, unless it be bottomed upon divine revelation.

Nor are our few notions, without a mixture of mistakes, and a great many doubts and difficulties, which disquiet the mind,

mind, becauſe we are not able to reſolve them. So that after many years ſtudy and travel, we come juſt thus far, to know enough to make us very humble.

And as for the other faculty of the ſoul, which is the principle of action, to wit, the *will*;—we find there ſo much guilt, as we cannot be ſufficiently humbled for all the days of our life.

For it is the *will* that committeth ſins; it is this faculty that chuſeth and conſenteth to a ſinful action, and that makes it our crime. The *underſtanding* dictates and propoſes the thing; but ſtill it is in the power of the *will*, whether to do it or no; and the more the will conſents to the ſin, the more ſinful it is always. No man can be forced to do any evil thing againſt his will, if he will but reſiſt. There may be allurements, and ſtrong temptations, but there can be no compulſion. All conſent and compliance is from within; and for that reaſon wicked people are juſtly liable to puniſhment, becauſe they chuſe to do that which they might avoid.

Now,

Now, how can any man think of his sins, and be proud? Especially since pride is the most accumulative sin of all, and deserves hell the more, because it is, after a peculiar manner, the very devil's sin. It is strange that any one should value himself for being in a state of damnation; and yet that is the state every wicked man is in, without true repentance, and reformation of life.

And is it possible for us to be truly sensible of this, and at the same time not to be cast down, under the sense of our sad deservings, and of that most miserable condition, which nothing can save us from, but the mere mercy of God?

Such reflections as these could not chuse but be very humbling, if vain men would not think it beneath their spirits, to admit and entertain them.

It is both the folly and wickedness of haughty people, that they banish from them thoughts of this nature, and mind only trifles, and things imaginary; quite overlooking those crimes, which (if attentively considered)

considered) would make them abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes.

People who seriously reflect that they deserve eternal damnation, and that without God's infinite clemency they shall receive it, can hardly be so very inconsistent with themselves, as to swell with a vain conceit of any other deservings. An evil conscience, and a true sense of guilt, is enough to lay the loftiest spirits low.

And this is one reason for which pride is concluded, by all considerate men, to be such a *foolish* vice; because haughty people value themselves upon things which are not valuable, not considering what they *justly* deserve; but throwing aside many melancholy thoughts, which are in truth most proper and fit for criminals.

The only thing worth our esteem is *virtue*; or, that gracious disposition of soul, whereby the righteous is *indeed* more excellent than others. Those moral habits, which are apt to cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, have an intrinsic dignity in them: For they are noble perfections

fections of our nature, and such resemblances of the Divine Being, as are in the sight of God himself of *great price*.—But yet even these excellent endowments are arguments for our humility; because they are not the productions of nature, but the fruits and effects of the holy spirit's operation.

It is by his free and gracious operation that we are made the children of grace, and are transformed in the renewing of our minds. Without Christ's assistance, by the holy spirit, we can do nothing. It is he that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

Upon this account, our spiritual graces are reasons for our *thankfulness*, but not for our *pride*; because we stand indebted to the mere goodness and bounty of God for them. *Who maketh thee to differ from another* (saith the apostle); *or what hast thou that thou didst not receive?* Now, *if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as though thou hadst not received it?*

Debtors are not wont to be proud of the obligations and bonds they are forced

to lie under. Poverty carrieth such shame with it, as serves to debase men, when hardly any thing else will. And though God giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, yet the sense of our necessitous and miserable condition by nature, and of our dependance upon God for the mending of our fortunes, is a very powerful motive to humble all of us; especially before that infinite being, to whose bounty and goodness we owe all that we have, and all that we are.

And so I pass on, from considering *whence we come*, and *what we are*, to consider also *what it is that we have*.

And if the things that I have already mentioned will serve to keep us from vanity and ostentation, the consideration of those *outward* matters, which the scripture calls the *things*, and the *fashion of the world*, must needs help to take down our minds the more still. For though the children of this world are wont to mind these things most, and are apt to be lifted up most of all by them; yet there is hardly a plainer argument than this is, of the great weakness of

of human nature, and of the folly it is subject to; that men are so swollen in their minds, because their temporal fortunes are bulky, because they are richer and greater than others: I mean, as some count riches and greatness, who speak the language of the world, and consider not what it is to be great and rich indeed.

Alas! these outward matters are *of a very mean, trifling, and contemptible nature*; colour and appearance only; and which receive their value only from men's fancies and imaginations.

Besides, *riches* (as Solomon observes) *make themselves wings*, and fly away. And this they do by the just judgment of God in heaven; because *men set their eyes* (as the scripture expresseth it) *upon that which is not, and set others at nought for that which is but vanity*. When they forget God, and themselves, after this manner, it is a very righteous thing for the judge of all the earth to humble them, by making the nest that was set on high empty, and by leaving it to the mercy of the fire, or

of the extortioner, which in effect is the ſame thing.

But although theſe external fortunes ſtay with us, and we with them, yet it is moſt unreaſonable for our hearts to be lifted up by the enjoyment of them, *becauſe they are far from being an argument of God's love to any.* No man (ſays Solomon) *knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him:* That is, none can certainly tell by his preſent worldly condition, whether he be in God's favour or no. For (as Solomon elſewhere obſerves) *All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, and to him that ſacrificeth not; as is the good, ſo is the ſinner; and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth an oath.* Which words yield us thus much: That, ſince this wretched world is not a place for us to receive our rewards, generally men ſhare alike, and without diſtinction, in the fortunes of the world. The divine providence ſcatters them promiſcuouſly, and with an indifferent

indifferent hand; which plainly shews, that in God's account they are such very inconsiderable things, that it is no matter how, or upon whom, they are thrown away.

And this indifferent distribution of these outward temporal matters is a very strong argument of a *future judgment*, which will be according to the rules of exact righteousness. Because, in the present administration of affairs, the wicked oftentimes enjoy a considerable share of the wealth, and pleasures, and honours of this world; it is very rational to conclude, that there will be a day for an after-reckoning, when all things shall be adjusted, and all mankind shall receive, according to what they have done, whether it be good or evil. Then, we may be sure, there will be no respect of persons; no distinction between rich and poor, between high and low; for all must stand upon the same level, and the only difference will be between the just and unjust,

AND what a terrible warning is this to the greatest men on earth, not to be high-minded, but to fear. Because their neglect-

ing those opportunities they have of doing good is more heinous; their ingratitude much more scandalous, their evil actions more visible, their examples more influential, their injustice more hurtful, their oppressions more intolerable;—and consequently their guilt and condemnation will be much greater than we may suppose those to be capable of incurring, who pass through the world in a manner destitute and naked, as they dropt into it.

Of all people in the world, none have greater reason to be humble than they who are in danger; nor are any in such a dangerous condition, as flourishing wretches; such as David speaks of,—*I was grieved (says he) at the foolish, when I saw them in such prosperity; for they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong. They come in no misfortune, like others; nor are they plagued like other men. And this is the cause (says he) that they are so holden with pride, and overwhelmed with cruelty.*

It were impossible for such men thus to swell in their prosperity, did they sadly consider David's observation (which we see
verified

verified every day): *O how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end! Haman* hanged; after all his greatness and insolence. The presuming *fool* snatched away, while he was building his barns, to stow up his many years wealth in. The *rich man* cast, out of his purple and fine linen, into hell torments. *Herod* smitten suddenly on his throne, and in his royal apparel.—These, and infinite instances more, shew what dangers the loftiest men are surrounded with, and what slippery ground they stand on, how great soever their presumptions are, that they shall never be moved.

And, if the common danger of ruin in this world be a reason to humble the haughtiest spirits, the most assuming and confident minds; certainly the prospect of a final judgment, and an irrevocable doom to everlasting and infinite misery, must (if duly entertained) cast such a damp upon the vain thoughts of men, as is enough to stain the pride of all human glory.

296 *Lovelinefs and Reasonablenefs, &c.*

UPON all which accounts, the reasonablenefs of the apostle's advice in my text fully appeareth, when he adviseth us to *put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the fight of God of great price.*

S E R M O N XVII.

Humility the Source of Ease and Quietness.

[From Dr. PELLING on Humility.]

PROV. XXIX. 23.

*A man's pride shall bring him low; but honour
shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

THESE words set forth unto us the
temporal advantages which attend
an humble state of mind here upon earth.

It brings unto men that peace and satisfaction, which is so much desired by all wise men.

A tranquillity of soul is the most desirable thing, that we are capable of on this side heaven; for it is the great happiness of this life; the happiness whereunto the general practice of religion tendeth; the happiness that is the foretaste of the comforts above; a specimen of that everlasting rest, which

is reserved for all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

This is so plain, that one needs to be at no labour to prove it. And, of *all* those virtues, which are instrumental and operative in order to this happiness, *humility* is one of the chief, because it sets the heart upon a basis, where it resteth quietly; safe and free from those impetuous passions, which work violently upon proud spirits; like a tempest that breaks the lofty cedars, but flies over the low ground, without doing any hurt, or making much noise.

There are several things, which are apt to discompose and ruffle men's minds, in this frail, mortal condition: And from all these, an humble heart is a great security.

As, FIRST OF ALL; *The guilt of sin.* This is a thing that carries a very quick sense with it, which naturally and deservedly disquieteth offenders. Nor is any thing so painful as an evil conscience, when once it beginneth to rage.

Now humility will preserve us from this guilt; and, by consequence, from the torment that would attend it,—if we will but learn to submit ourselves to God,

to his laws, and to his pleasure in all things; (as the due consideration of our own meanness, must needs incline us to do.)

An humble heart is not apt to be lifted up against its maker, nor to resist and disobey his commands; because it is conscious of God's greatness, power, and authority over us all; and of that infinite distance which is between his glorious Majesty and us poor creatures, who are worms, earth, vanity, nothing in comparison.

Obedience doth naturally spring from such lowly thoughts. And so, *that* peace and comfort which is the fruit of obedience, must spring in the mind too.

In short, it is that spiritual refreshment and ease, which our blessed Saviour hath promised to his followers, and particularly to such as follow the example of his great humility; *Learn of me, (says he) for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

ANOTHER thing that is wont to discompose men's minds, is, *a sense of disrespect.*—We are too ready (God knows) to entertain
very

very kind thoughts of our own selves, and to expect that others should think as we do, and should shew that deference and respect, which we fancy to be due from others, because we are fond of attributing it to ourselves.

When vain men find themselves disappointed, what pain and anguish are they in presently? Impatient and dejected, as if their whole happiness consisted in that single instance.

This is one great reproach of pride, that it is always ready with a rack, for those who never think themselves high enough: Nor are any so crucified, as they who are most in love with this tyrant vice.

Every thing that looks like contempt, is a nail that createth fresh torture in them. Whereas a spirit of humility delivers one from pains of this nature. Because such a man considers, *whose* face it was that was spit upon, before he endured the cross. And if the Son of God was so patient under the greatest indignities, certainly a poor sinful man hath reason, when the right cheek is used contumeliously, to turn the
left

left also, though the disgrace be never so provoking.

—But in this case, an humble person finds not sufficient *cause* of disturbance; because he is supposed to be despicable in his own eyes; and if he thinks his eyes do not deceive him, how is it a provocation that he is so in the eyes of others? Their agreement in the same opinion, is not matter of trouble, but rather of complacency; because each party believes his opinion to be right.

It was the advice of one of the ancients, If (says he) in order to expose thee, people proclaim some of thy faults, do not stand upon thy defence, as if they did thee wrong, but say only, they are ignorant people; for if they knew all thy faults, they would not have mentioned these alone. By such a modest turn of the hand, it is easy to wipe off the foulest scandal, before it sinks into the breast.

And besides, whatever the disrespect be, and what impressions soever it makes, it sits the easier upon an humble man's mind, because he takes it as a means of making
him

him the more humble still. For lowly hearts are apt to mistrust, that they are never lowly enough. And therefore when any thing happens, which helps to abase them, whether it be deserved or no, it is not unwelcome, because it is of very good use, and may have been ministered by the hand of God, for the good man's particular advantage.

Thus *David* took it, when *Shimei* cursed him, and threw stones at him: So let him curse, said the king, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.

And when we make such a religious construction of affronts and contumelies, as things intended for our good; and such a religious use of them, as to be bettered and made more humble by them,—they must needs lose that bitterness and gall, which is so very distasteful and grievous to proud men, who want the divine art of turning them to advantage.

ANOTHER thing that too often inquieteth men's minds is, the great prosperity of others as to their outward fortunes;

SERM. XVII. *Ease and Quietness.* 303

tunes ; because, in the distribution of these temporal blessings, the divine providence doth not observe the rules of exact equality.

People whose condition is much lower than their neighbours look upon those above them with an evil eye, grow impatient, fretful, and complaining, because (forsooth) the same liberal and open hand is not extended unto themselves.

Such greedy and reaching desires can never be without great vexation of spirit, especially when industry and ambition have made many unsuccessful attempts to get higher.

In which case nothing certainly can be such a speedy and effectual relief to the soul, to give it peace and rest, as true humility.

The first thought that is naturally incident to an humble man is, that as all right is in God, the great and sole proprietor, who hath an indisputable power to do what he pleaseth with his own ; so the greatest title we can pretend to, is that of tenants at will. And for such entire dependants,

pendants, to be envious at the divine administration, is the most impious unthankfulness; when we have all of us as little reason to murmur, as we have ability to pay unto God what we are indebted to him.

And this humble consideration, that God is our absolute sovereign, but not our debtor, is one strong reason for us to acquiesce, and be content with our portion; because, though it be not as great as other men's, yet it is enough to make us not only satisfied, but thankful; and to say, with Jacob, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant.*

And humility further teacheth us to consider, that whatsoever our condition is, it is that which is best and fittest for us. Of this indeed we ourselves are not competent judges, because our understandings are as weak as our desires are unreasonable. And were our fortunes in our own hands, our partiality and ignorance would make us the very worst carvers of them. God knows best what we most need. And that alone

is proper, which he sees to be necessary and convenient.

And by this account it appears what an useful virtue humility is, to rid our minds of all foolish impatience, and to compose them into a serene and calm state, how invidious soever the condition and circumstances of others may be.

BUT FURTHER; AND MORE PARTICULARLY :—Another thing which is greatly apt to disquiet men's minds is *affliction*.

There are many cross, calamitous accidents in this life, which we cannot digest under any one general head, so well as under this common name of *afflictions*; so called, because they give very painful *blows* to the heart of such people, as are not in some good measure improved and perfected by the discipline of religion.

And these afflictions are of *two* sorts; some that are actually *felt*, and others that we *fear*: *Both* are grievous; for though *present* afflictions yield the quickest sense, yet many times *future* ones create the most melancholy pain; nay, the bare appre-

hension and prospect of them, when at some distance, usually makes longer and deeper impressions upon men's minds, than when they are engaged and wrestling with them in a direct conflict.

In *each* of these cases humility affords the best auxiliaries. So that how lowly and subdued soever one's *heart* is, he can lift up his *head* in the day of distress.

I shall speak of them separately. And first, as to *present* afflictions.

There are various considerations, which naturally serve to make every humble Christian very easy, if not chearful, in his own mind.

One is, *That though second causes be the immediate instruments of affliction, yet the hand of God doth so order, govern, and direct them, that we are still under his management in all conditions.* And since it is so, what can so well become a lowly mind, as that modest resignation which old Eli expressed, when he said, *It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good?*

—*Dost thou well to be angry?*—As the great Governor of the World was pleased

to argue with Jonah, when he was in his sullen mood : By which mild expostulation God sheweth, that whether he spares or destroys, it is still our duty to acquiesce in his divine pleasure; and that it is the *foolishness of man* (as Solomon observeth) *which maketh his heart to fret against the Lord.*

In the next place it must be considered, that *whether God afflicteth men by the hands of others, or with his own hands, and by his immediate providence, it must be acknowledged that the judge of all the earth doth still do right.*

Considering the scandalous provocations which are given by some, the heinous (though secret) crimes which are acted by others, the faults which the best are guilty of, and the corruption of heart which is in all, none can reasonably expect to steal out of this world, without his share of troubles.

The humble man will consider this, and the due consideration of it must needs stop his mouth, and quiet his mind, in reference to God's proceedings; because he cannot but be sensible, that his sufferings are the consequent of his offences, and that his

sufferings fall so much short of his offences, that if we put both of them into the scales, and then judge by weight, the burden that is in one scale, how heavy soever it may seem, is really very light, hardly any thing in comparison of those demerits, which by a vast overweight do bear and keep down the other.

Humility directs us, in all cases, to reflect not so much upon our *grievances*, as our *guilt*. And, if people in affliction would take this safe and prudent course, there would be no room, nor reason, for any sorrow of heart, besides *that* which worketh repentance unto salvation. *Wherefore* (says the prophet Jeremiah) *doth a living man complain; a man, for the punishment of his sins?*

It is to be considered further upon this head,—*That in visiting men's offences with a rod, God doth not act purely as a judge, but rather with the wisdom and tenderness of a father; either to keep his children still within the limits of their duty, or to reclaim them from their wanderings.*

Outward

Outward ease is naturally apt to corrupt men's manners, as fulness and idleness is to vitiate the blood, and to ruin one's constitution. Therefore, to exercise the soul, and thereby to preserve it in the right state, God doth commonly use such a measure of severity, as he knows we stand in need of. And when a man makes an application of this to himself, after an humble manner, he cannot but be satisfied with the apostle's argument, *If we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

For this gracious purpose sake, they who are conscious to themselves of their deserts and wants (as all humble persons are), cannot but possess their souls in patience, under the hand that correcteth; and with thankfulness too, for stripes which are thus profitable and advantageous to them.

It is also further considerable what character St. Paul gives of afflictions,—that they are *common to man*.—And considering that it is a general lot, the humble in soul will sit down quiet, and well contented to have a share : *for how (says he) am I better than my neighbour ?*

Indeed it is no comfort to good nature to see others in misery, yet every man's grief is much the less, when discipline is administered impartially. And of all others, the humble man's satisfaction is the greatest, when comparing his sins and his sufferings with other men's, he findeth so vast a disproportion ; as if God were particularly merciful to him, in visiting more, and (as he thinks) more *heinous* offences, with fewer and less afflicting stripes.

It is one great cause of murmurs and impatience, that we look at the prosperity, not at the misfortunes, of other people ; at least that we do not lay them equally to heart. Their glittering condition strikes the tenderest side, and there makes the deepest impressions. The sense of their affliction goes off with a pleasant slide ;
espe-

especially where nature is too hard for religion.

But were our humility like unto St. Paul's, when he owned himself *less than the least of all saints*, yea, *the chiefest of sinners*, it would be impossible for us to be very uneasy under our afflictions, in the midst of which we find *him* still rejoicing.

In short, he that is vile and worthless in his own estimate, cannot but learn, in what state soever he is, therewith to be content, unless he will be so false to himself, as to condemn his own opinion, and reverse his own judgment.

Which sufficiently demonstrates what an inestimable blessing humility is to the soul, amidst all the various and troublesome incumbrances of this life. At once it polisheth our nature, and refresheth us with delights; that is, it doth us all the good that we are capable of enjoying in a mortal state. There is such a perfect union between this virtue and happiness, that it is impossible for a man to be truly humble,

but he must in spite of fortune be also truly happy.

So much as to *present* afflictions. Let us next consider afflictions *in prospect*. And indeed, of all afflictions, those which we pretend to discern aloof off, do many times affect the mind with the greatest anguish. And here it is necessary to observe, how advantageous this virtue is, when a calamity threatens and looks terrible at a distance. In this case also there are several things, which humility suggesteth to our minds, for the ease and satisfaction of them.

Our whole dependence being upon the care of that infinite Being, who is the governor and disposer of all things, we may be sure that nothing can befall us contrary unto, or without his pleasure. So that though we are little contemptible things of ourselves, yet considering whose creatures we are, and whose hands we are in, it is our duty in all ominous circumstances, to commit ourselves to God with such resignation as becomes the condition of poor shiftless beings, that are left entirely

SERM. XVII. *Ease and Quietness.* 313

to him, and depend every moment upon his providence.—

Again: God being infinitely wise, governing and ordering every part of the universe with constant respect to the whole, it is our wisdom to acquiesce in our lots, as God shall please to dispense them, and to make his blessed will our choice;—in regard that we ourselves are so very short-sighted and partial, that we are not fit to be our own chusers, because we do not know what we *should*, but crave only for what we *would* have.

And lastly, it is to be observed,—That however events prove, it is not out of our power to make an honest and religious use of them, and then *all things shall work together for good to them that love God.*

These humble considerations must needs minister great rest and comfort to one's soul, though future contingencies carry with them a terrible aspect; and thereby the reasonableness and excellence of our duty appears, of taking no anxious, carking thoughts about to-morrow.

Because

Because God presideth over all,—many things which we presage do not happen; the clouds frequently drop, before they advance over our heads. And how can the humble man answer it to his own mind, to crucify himself beforehand for that which, for ought he knows, may never come to pass?

Because God is infinitely wise and good,—*who* can certainly tell what is within the cloud? or, whether many *blessings* may not fall down together with the storm? It is inconsistent with humility to pry into God's counsels after a distrustful manner, and consequently to perplex one's heart with a grievous apprehension of accidents, which perhaps may be for his great advantage. Or suppose it be a *real* calamity that is coming, it is an humble man's part to leave God to his own time, and to wait God's leisure, without going forward to meet an evil, which he is bound to be patient under, but not to anticipate: *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof* (said the humble Jesus).—

AND

AND now the result of the whole matter is this: That as all the happiness of this life is lodged in virtue, so this virtue of humility doth contribute towards it, after a more especial manner, and in a singular degree; because it resigneth up the soul to God's wisdom and pleasure in all conditions.

So that in all afflicting circumstances, whether actually felt, or apprehended only, the truly humble person possesseth his soul in patience, and is blessed with tranquillity in as great measures, as a frail nature is capable of receiving in *this* life; and is a proper disposition and qualification for eternal happiness in the other.

S E R M O N XVIII.

Advantages of Humility.

[From Dr. PELLING on Humility.]

ROM. XII. 3.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.——

THE apostle is here exhorting to the great christian virtue of *humility*, or *lowliness of mind*. And in treating thereupon, I shall offer to your consideration certain motives and arguments, drawn from the great *usefulness* of this virtue, which may engage our faculties in the pursuit, and be a means to excite us to the practice of it.

AND the *first* thing which I shall mention is this: *That this virtue of humility possesseth*

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 317

possesseth us with a genuine sense of our defects and wants, and thereby is excellently adapted to help our progress and perfection in virtue; for this is necessary to all manner of improvements, that we see first wherein we are defective.

That observation which hath been made, —That many might be very wise in time, but that they foolishly think themselves wise enough already,—will hold true in all cases. Men might easily be better artists, better scholars, better christians than they are, if a false opinion of their accomplishments did not supersede their industry.

And this is apparently the mischievous effect of pride,—that it shuts a man (as it were) out of himself; makes him incapable of finding out that blind side, and evil temper, which requires help, but admits of none for want of discovery. And the reason is, because such men take not a clear and fair view; they overlook those manifold faults which deserve their eye, and contemplate only those which dazzle it.

Hence

318 *Advantages of Humility.*

Hence it comes to pass, that a great many flaws within them escape their observation; and they are no proficient, because they are not properly *teachers*, but *admirers* of themselves; lifted up with the vanity and confidence of those our Saviour pointed to, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.

That humble apostle, who confessed his sins to the whole world, and proclaimed himself the chiefest of sinners, counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. And though he spake as if he were blameless, as touching the righteousness which was by the law; yet he threw aside all that righteousness of his own; not conceiving that he had already attained, or was already perfect; but forgetting those things which were behind, he reached forth unto those things which were before, pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

As many as are perfectly humble will be thus minded; thus zealous to run and to finish their course well. Because they are
conscious

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 319

conscious of their former miscarriages, of their present infirmities, defects, unworthiness, incumbrances, and natural proneness to slip and fall; they know the better what care to take, what temptations they are to avoid, what weights they are to lay aside, what aids of grace they are to pray for, and what supplies are most necessary for them.

They are always jealous over themselves with godly jealousy; still fearing, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so their minds should be corrupted, from the simplicity that is in Christ. They think that their sins can never be mortified enough, nor their hearts be clean enough, nor their repentance fruitful enough, nor their devotion ardent enough, nor their charity great enough, nor any other acts of religion worthy enough of *his* gracious acceptance, who loved them, and gave himself for them.

These are so far from being discouragements, that they are great motives to a course of proficiency. For though when we have done all, we must acknowledge ourselves

ourselves unprofitable servants, and come short of our duty, though our minds and endeavours be sincere; yet considering, that not so much as a cup of cold water loseth its reward, and considering the great goodness of the Lord Jesus, who is pleased with what we are able to do,—the meanest performances must afford such a comfortable prospect, as will invite the humble, to proceed from virtue to virtue, while all the pomp of proud men, with their stiff necks and inflexible hearts, serves only to alienate their minds from religion by degrees, till they come to that high pitch of insolence, which David speaks of, *The wicked (says he) through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*

A SECOND advantage of an humble temper is this: *That it governs and moderates our inordinate desires.*—There is hardly a worse plague than a craving and greedy appetite after the things that are in the world, the pleasures, honours, and profits of it. An inordinate desire of these things
doth

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 321

doth not only come from an evil principle, but also is of very evil consequence; because it cannot be answered. Such an appetite is always craving; and the wretch that condemns himself to the slavish office of feeding it, cannot, with all his drudgeries, satisfy it; for, instead of being filled, it stretcheth daily.

From these boundless desires proceed a world of moral evils, which torment mankind, and disorder the state of human affairs; as envy, murmurings, uncharitableness, strife, and innumerable sorts of injustice and oppression. Of all which, none are more apt to be guilty than proud men, who enlarge their desires as hell, and as death that cannot be satisfied.

Indeed this doth necessarily follow; for those inordinate cravings being both bred and cherished by the vast opinion which men have of their own deservings, they must needs think themselves very hardly used by God himself, and consequently grudge, and grow impatient, troublesome, and vexatious, if their merits be not rewarded;

according to that estimate which they themselves take of them.

Nor is such a reward possible to be given; because whatever their condition is, still there is something or other in it, which answers not expectations.

Moderate prosperity can bear no manner of proportion to the unmeasurable opinion and appetite of a proud person, and therefore it cannot possibly satisfy him; because the enjoyments he hath, fall so very short of what he thinks he should have.

And if God be pleased to heap up the things of this world upon him in great abundance, neither doth this please the vain wretch, so as to satisfy him to the full; because the opinion of his merits still swells, as his fortunes grow. His singular acquisitions he takes as some reward of his singular deservings, and as an argument and sign of something more behind, which he should, and is to have yet.

Now every one may see what mischiefs come from such wicked tempers, and the world has every day too great reason to lament them. They plainly shew, that to
be

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 323

be of an humble mind is not only a very necessary duty, but also an excellent blessing; that which keeps one from many hurtful exorbitances, and makes him incapable of annoying, and of being a grievance to himself and others.

Having a mean opinion of his own worth, he is therefore contented with his outward fortunes, because he thinks them greater than he deserves. He is satisfied with what is needful, and that is but little in comparison, because nature requires not much, unless vanity creates an appetite after many things, which might better be spared, because they are over-charging.

And though a man's particular condition and state of life doth call for more than what is just proportionable to the necessities of nature, yet the most chargeable stations are attended with much excess; and many expences should be retrenched, which are merely thrown away upon luxury and vanity.

Many great inconveniences and evils might easily be avoided, would men but suffer their impertinent ambition to shrink,

and their minds to be governed by a spirit of humility.

And after all, the laws of it require us, whatever our outward qualities and circumstances are, to repose our cares in God's bosom, where all humble men think them so safely lodged, that there can be no room in their own breasts for those tumultuous desires, which set the world in an uproar. Without acting against their own friendly principle, they cannot but rest in Christ's promise, that all these things shall be added unto them, that is, all the necessary things of this life; and to vex the world and ourselves about more, is only to be mad to no purpose.

FURTHER: Besides the advantage which an humble mind yields unto us, by governing and regulating our desires, there is this additional happiness by it,—*that it guards us from many hurtful sins, which pride of heart leads people to.*—This is such a fruitful, teeming vice, that there are not many sins, but what are nearly related to it; envy, wrath, covetousness, singularity, intractableness,

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 325

tractableness, vain-glory, avarice, censoriousness, affectation of power, and divers other vices, are either the immediate issue, or the kindred of this; and all are set on work to support it.

Any one may see how fatally it operates, in undermining and ruining the common comforts of human life, together with the peace and interests of all societies, whether they be civil or sacred. It is pride of heart that denies obedience, that disjoins families, that oppresseth and tyrannizeth over a neighbourhood, that disturbs kingdoms, that levies wars, that violates order, and (as a ready way to all manner of mischief) that stops men's ears against honest and faithful counsels, because they are in their own thoughts wiser and better than others, and count it a lessening to be directed.

Did humility take its due place under our roofs, these various evils would soon be removed. The first work of humility is, to mould our hearts into an obsequious, pliable, and pacific temper. *With the lowly* (saith Solomon) *is wisdom*:—he means that wisdom which is from above, which

is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

The truth is, were nothing else to be considered but the present welfare of societies, an humble disposition is of such vast use for the procuring and preserving of it, that if we might suppose a community to consist of the wisest men that ever were in the world, and that they were to find out and agree amongst themselves upon some one thing that should be most advantageous for the whole,—they could not pitch upon any thing more beneficial, more conducing to every one's good, than the universal practice of this admirable virtue. It disposeth men of all degrees and ranks, whether superiors, inferiors, or equals, to behave themselves so, in their respective stations, that mankind could not chuse but be very happy even in this life, were this single virtue sincerely practised by all, as it should be.

It disposeth all governors to condescend to those of low estate; to be ministers and servants to the rest, even as the Son of Man came

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 327

came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

It disposeth such as are to be governed, to be subject to the higher powers; to submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

It disposeth people that stand upon the same level, and are of the same degree, to be kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.

In short, the office of humility is to cast out of us the very offal of human nature; to cure us of all imperious, surly, and perverse humours; to sooth and soften our tempers; to animate us with a condescending, complaisant, and gentle spirit; to make us tractable and easy, candid and truly gracious, as it becomes those, whose mutual necessities require them to stoop to each other, to relieve each other, to bear with each other's infirmities.

And what a happy world would it be, were we all thus minded? Those vices which annoy and infest mankind would hardly be so much as heard of. To be sure, the mischievous effects of them would not be felt, so as to disorder all affairs, and to throw people into such fits of rage and distraction, as if the world were nothing but a great hospital of madmen.

AND, as the spirit of true humility guards us from being guilty of many hurtful sins, so also it hath this further effect,—that *it secures us from the evil of the sins of others*, which the foolish pride of men is naturally apt to bring upon us. If it shall please God, for particular reasons, to suffer at any time some untoward accidents to happen, which are not immediately and directly of our own chusing, an humble mind will help us to make such a wholesome use of them, as to turn that into good discipline, which to fastidious and intractable tempers is a very painful sore;—and this is the *last* argument which
I shall

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 329

I shall mention of the great usefulness of this virtue.

Amongst these *accidents* we may reckon domestic misfortunes, disappointments of expectation, miscarriages in friendship, loss of liberty, decay or want of fortune, and the like; contingent pressures, which to men of unsubdued minds are things very heavy and grievous to be born.

But as bees gather honey out of the driest and prickliest herbs, so good men may draw something that is proper and beneficial for them out of the sharpest misfortunes. There are no trials, but what will yield a kindly extract, where art and industry undertake improvements. And if men would apply their minds to this sort of work, they might at once improve their natures, and their satisfactions also.

It may be hard perhaps at the first, but time and perseverance will help all men to draw good out of any evil. Nor are any so well prepared for it, as men of humble minds. Because divers things will sink into their thoughts, which the hearts of others

others are too big and too hard for: As,—that no man ought to be master of the world, or of his own fortunes; but that we should rather make our minds pliant and suitable to our condition, whatever that be. If it be retirement we are confined to, the best way is to turn it into an opportunity for contemplation, and spiritual exercise and improvement. And thus knowledge and wisdom might be the extract of such misfortunes.

Again; the world, for great reasons, is subject to variety of chances. And why (saith the humble man) should the course of things be altered for our sakes, when our betters before us have had their turns too; and when constant experience shews us, that every thing is fickle and liable to changes; and that the world is no other than a scene, that for a time pleases, but soon deceives the eye? and the consequent of this meditation is, That we should set our affections on things above.

Again; notwithstanding this diversity and uncertainty of affairs, if people would but make just comparisons, they might easily

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 331

easily find that the measure of their wants bears no proportion to the greatness of their enjoyments.—But this is a great fault, that they overlook many blessings which are under their eye, and turn their thoughts loose and fugitive after some little thing that is lost. Like children, who, when a single toy is taken from them, cry and roar for that, neglecting all other things, which may be of greater value.—It is pity that *men* should outlive the *innocence* of childhood, and retain its *follies*: If they were governed by a spirit of true humility, they would make such a religious use of those wants, which they count mischances, as to be thankful to God that they are not greater nor more.

Further yet: Suppose one's misfortunes to be great indeed;—an humble mind will direct him to consider, whether other men's do not equal, and perhaps exceed them. Few indeed take such an estimate of them, because they do not create such an acute and home-pain, as the little thorn which is in one's own flesh. But we see afflictions are every where. And since
they

they are common to all mankind, humility teacheth us to take it for our comfort, that we are not singular; and, instead of murmuring, to express our gratitude by works of charity and compassion to our neighbours.—This is to make a good use of God's dispensations, and to all this we are directed by an humble mind.

And yet, lastly, There is one thing more which ought not to be omitted upon this argument, and that is this: That, upon the whole matter, we should set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. It was a saying of one of the philosophers of old, That the readiest way to be *rich* is, not to enlarge one's estate, but to limit one's desires. And this is the ready way to be *happy* too; to keep our minds from roving, and to confine them to the things which are at home before us.

When misfortunes disquiet us, the great fault is within ourselves, because we want much of the philosopher, as well as of the christian; and place our happiness not in the
practice

SERM. XVIII. *Advantages of Humility.* 333

practice of virtue, but in outward foreign acquisitions.

And this is the reason that we are so troubled about them, and dejected when we miss them; whereas we should rather apply our minds to that one thing necessary, which is always ready at hand, and never to be taken away without our own consent.

In a word, humility prompts us to improve our spiritual state, by the dispensations of God, in every mortifying condition; to grow wiser or better by them; to become the more meek, the more patient, the more devout, the more mindful of our whole duty to God and man.

And if we be careful to answer the ends of the divine providence to us, after this humble manner, though the things which the world thirsteth after fall to a low ebb, —we shall have waters enough within our own cisterns to refresh our souls, till we get to those rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

S E R M O N XIX.

Humility how to be expressed.

[From Dr. PEBLING on Humility.]

JOHN XIII. 14.

*If I then, your lord and master, have washed
your feet, ye also ought to wash one an-
other's feet.*

WASHINGS and purifications of
divers kinds were part of the Jewish
religion. And particularly upon going
into an house, it was usual with them
always to wash their feet. For as they
went barefooted oftentimes, and at other
times with only a very slender covering,
which they put off upon entering the house;
it was in some sort necessary at their first
entrance to wash the feet; which also had
a *spiritual* signification, and was an emblem
of cleansing themselves from the pollution
of sin. One washing of which kind our

Saviour

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 335

Saviour hath adopted into the christian religion, in the office of baptism.

Unto which humble employment of washing the feet, not only of himself, but also of his disciples, our blessed Lord himself vouchsafed to condescend; thereby giving an example unto all ages, in what manner he would have his followers to demean themselves one towards another: *If I, your lord and master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*

Which words do most effectually recommend unto us the true spirit of christian humility and condescension.

In treating whereupon at this time, I shall offer some special instances, wherein this spirit ought more particularly to exert itself.

AND the first and most natural expression of our humility is this: *To do all the good offices we can, how mean and inferior soever they may seem to men of haughty eyes.*

To succour the poor fatherless; to comfort the forlorn widow; to stretch out the hand

hand to the needy; to lend it to the blind; to sympathize with and to comfort the sick; to deliver the prisoner and oppressed; to treat enemies courteously; to shew respect to the most vulgar, the most unfortunate part of mankind: These and the like acts of deference are looked upon with a disdainful eye by supercilious men, who think themselves privileged from such trivial offices, by the quality of their character, or the loftiness of their station.

And yet the Lord Jesus stooped down to the washing his disciples' feet; nay, those very feet that were now running swiftly to shed his blood; which astonishing example shews, that the most lowly ministrations are far from being beneath us, who stand indebted to each other in the bond of one common nature, and are allied by the contract of a common *guilt* too. If he, the most blessed and glorious Son of God, came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; good God! what offices can be servile enough for wretches, whose base extraction, and much baser crimes, render

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 337

US unworthy to be called either sons or servants.

Mind not high things, says the apostle to the Romans, *but condescend to men of low estate*. He calls that condescension, which in strictness of speech might be called due retribution; an intercourse of justice, which ought to pass between man and man, considering that we all stand upon the same ground, equally involved in the same necessities, mutually indebted by reciprocal obligations, and distinguished only by the pageantry and vanity of the world.

All mankind consist of the same materials, of the earth, earthy; and though some parts of this earth be fairer and more specious than the rest, yet others may have more intrinsic value, if in such things there be any value at all.

In lowliness of mind, saith St. Paul again, *let each esteem other better than themselves*: that is, in their actions towards them, let them shew to others that deference and respect, and minister to them so, as if they were better; as indeed they may be, in

VOL. I. Z

some respect or other, whatever the proudest may think.

All have not the same gifts; at least they have not the same proportion and measure. The most contemptible man hath something perhaps wherein he doth excel; even as the foot hath abilities, which the eye wanteth. Therefore that other command of the apostle, that *in honour we should prefer one another*, is bottomed upon great reason, because in every one there is something which is preferable; to be sure an humble man will find, in those of the lowest rank, this or that which deserves preference.

And from this fountain all acts of charity, goodness, and condescension do naturally flow. Because, how mean soever the offices may appear and seem to be, a lowly heart will think them a sort of debt, which he is obliged to pay to those, who upon some account or other, and for some faculties and endowments, excel him, and are much his betters.

It is the nature of humility to take from itself, and to bestow that respect and esteem

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 339

it parts with, any where rather than at home; and if we would all be once persuaded to apply our minds to the hearty love and practice of this single virtue; what admirable effects would it not produce? The most ordinary works of love would not be grudged. The meanest of our fellow-creatures would be within every one's reach, and under every one's care. We should soon learn to be so affable, gentle, courteous, friendly, charitable, compassionate, and assistant unto all; that a more effectual course could not be taken, to make our own and other men's lives happy, and to mend the condition of this world, where we see daily such vicissitudes and misfortunes. If humanity constrains us to lift up an ass or an ox out of the pit, I am sure humble minds would not permit us to let any of those, for whom Christ died, to lie long in a distressful condition.

A SECOND expression of our humility should be this: *To have as mean an opinion of the things of the world, as we have of our own selves.*—The apostle adviseth, that

we be content with such things as we have. Covetousness is inconsistent with a spirit of humility, because it is always attended with a distrust of God's providence, and with a secret averseness to submit to his will, and is very usually too a subservient vice to pride; a slave and drudge, to toil for the support of it. It is the taking away, or detaining, of what is not one's own; or, an inordinate desire of that which he hath no right unto.

And the great reason why men reach out their hands to wrest other men's possessions from them, and are greedy of laying field to field, and do such other acts of oppression, as are contrary to the laws of religion and nature; the reason, I say, of this injustice is, because men intend thereby to lift up themselves the higher in the world; they rob, and cozen, and overreach, in order to their advancement; and that they may be the more conspicuous, by standing upon an heap, though wrath and vengeance be under it, to blow up all at last.

Men

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 341

Men of humble minds had rather stand on low ground, to be hid in a multitude. For since the Lord Jesus was pleased to be numbered with transgressors, a poor sinful man need not care what his lot is, and among whom he chanceth to be reckoned. Whatever his station be, it is better than he deserves.

This one humble reflection should be enough to persuade us, in what condition soever we are, therewith to be content.

But besides this, there is in every humble soul a disposition to consider, that God is the sovereign ruler of the universe; that no part of it is out of the reach of his eye, or out of the verge of his providence; that he always acteth according to the laws of his own infinite reason, and as it is best for his creatures; that he assigneth to every man his lot and place; that he is the only competent judge to determine what is proper for every man, and what a man himself is fittest for; that he taketh a due care of every one, and provideth such things for him, as are most suitable to his quality

Z 3

and

and calling ; and that such as seek him shall want no manner of thing that is good.

These principles are deeply rooted in all lowly hearts, that are rightly prepared to submit to the will, and to depend upon the promises of God. And the genuine product of them is this, that it is our best course to commit ourselves to God's disposal, and to be satisfied with his providence and determination. This is infinitely more becoming and advantageous than to be always repining and craving, as those humourful people are, who, by taking false measures of themselves, think whatever is done for them, to fall short of their merits ; and grudge if they be not satisfied, when by stretching their desires continually, they render themselves incapable of being filled.

Therefore, to express our humility, we must, as I said, have as mean an opinion of the world, as we have of our own selves. The reason why men cover the things of this life, with such greediness and ambition, is, because they think happiness to consist in riches and greatness, and those

to

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 343

to be the happiest persons, who have the largest share of them.—Now this is a most gross mistake; an argument of a childish and little mind. For such outward enjoyments are for the most part instruments of sin; and then *they* are the most unfortunate men, that carry such edged tools in their hands. The greater they are, the more able they are to do themselves and others mischief, and the more ready many times to do it. Vanity, luxury, and an extravagant life, are too often the sad consequences of a plentiful fortune; and when the loss comes to be felt which such expensive vices bring, injustice and rapine commonly follow next, and a prey is made of defenceless innocence.

Or if men have the grace to make a better use of God's blessings, yet the enjoyment of them yields no more real comfort than what people of an inferior class are blessed with, who have air, and food, and cloaths, and rest, as well as the most prosperous. There may be in a palace more splendor and gaiety; but this affords no more solid felicity than a meaner habitation.

In this respect, the humble cottage may have much the advantage, where (as Solomon expresth it) *the sleep of the labouring man is sweet.*

Those pleasures which human nature universally thirsteth after run commonly in low channels; the despised part of mankind go away with them; to be sure, with as great a portion of them, as the most craving men can have. And it is in vain to look for happiness any where below, but in the exercise of virtue, particularly this virtue, contentedness of mind; without that, and for want of that alone, the greatest man upon earth is unhappy, amidst all his honours and splendor.

THIRDELY; Having thus possessed our minds with low thoughts of the world, we must, in the next place, shew our humility by *being satisfied with things necessary.*

My meaning is not, that we must desire no more than what is just enough to support nature; for there are many things which one's calling, quality, and condition

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 345

of life calleth for, besides what nature requires for its maintenance.

The necessities of princes and great men are more and greater than what ordinary people can pretend; and so it is, throughout all inferior ranks and orders of men, according as their families and charges are, and according as their degree and condition is, wherein the providence of God hath placed them, so are their necessities; these rise or sink in proportion to the other.

The short of the matter then is this: That when God hath made competent provision for us, answerable to our condition, suitable to that place, degree, and station, wherein he hath been pleased to dispose of us, we should command our desires, and keep them from running out, and from roving abroad after things superfluous.

If superfluities fall into our hands of themselves, we are to dispense them where they are needful, and as it is most for the glory of God, and for the good of our brethren. But our appetites must not be so inordinate, as to crave for more than what

what we want ourselves: And when those necessities are answered, we should be satisfied and thankful.

It is *pride* that makes men unsatiable; because they think they never have as much as they deserve: And this is its condemnation that it quarrels with God because he doth not humour us, and for not gratifying our desires, though he liberally supplies our real wants. It is a very true observation, That none are so fretful, so greedy, so reaching after more, as those to whom God hath been very open-handed, and who have the most reason, not to complain, but to give thanks.

Humble men are glad of that which is within their reach, and make themselves happy in the enjoyment of it, because they take it as the portion which God sees fittest for them, although not perhaps that which they most wished.

A *competency* is best; and few can think they want that, if they be not so partial as to make their own unreasonable appetites judges in the case. An upright conscience will tell them, that they have at hand what

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 347

is for their necessity, and also for their delights.

Indeed God doth not rain down his blessings upon some, as he doth upon others; but the reason is, because great plenty would not be so good for them. Such is the temper of some men's hearts, that were they as great and powerful as they could wish, there could be no tolerable living near them, and very slender hopes of their own living well in another world; so apt are many to make an ill use of the riches of God's mercy.

It is therefore an act of his wisdom and goodness to keep those low, whose exaltation would be fatal. But as for the necessary accommodations of life, he provides those for all, and gives them opportunity and means of gathering every day as much as will serve their turn, if they will exert the requisite endeavours.

It is not nature, but luxury, that complains for not being fed; and the mother of that is *pride*, which is insatiable.

Our

Our real necessities are not hard to be answered, if we would confine our fugitive desires, and suffer ourselves to be contented with what may be daily procured, by the blessing of God upon our honest industry. Food and cloaths no body needs to want : And that is as much as the very greatest can have ; and more than they can carry with them into the other world. And why should not every lowly heart be pleased, to have the same portion ; in having these necessities provided for as well, though not with the vanity of sumptuous and gorgeous furniture.

That plain and humble man, the father of the twelve tribes, as he was journeying towards Haran, was an emblem to all that travel towards the land of everlasting rest. He passed on with a poor staff in his hand, and at Bethel he took of the stones he found there, and put them for his pillow, and lay down upon them to sleep. And in the morning, he set them up for a pillar, and pouring oil upon the top of it, he vowed a vow, saying, *If God will be with*

me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. Here was gratitude, simplicity, and religion, mixed with the modesty of a truly humble mind. The thing he asked for was bread and raiment. And considering what an improvement is made by christianity, this single example renders St. Paul's exhortation the more binding,—*Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.*

In order whereunto, we should yet learn one thing further, in the

FOURTH place, namely, *not to make envious comparisons between our own condition and the state of those who are superior to us.*

This is a great cause of men's dissatisfactions and murmurings, not that themselves want, but because others have a more liberal allowance.

The

The original of this is pride, which makes men look askint upon those above them, wishing themselves in their place, or at least in a level with them, and thinking it hard measure that their station and fortunes are not greater; and all this upon a vain supposition of their own, that they are as deserving as the best.

This is to direct providence, and to set up against it, than which nothing can be more inconsistent with a spirit of humility; for they who have a mean opinion of themselves must needs think they are well used, if they have any room assigned them by the Almighty, though it be the lowermost seat; and are obliged to acquiesce in his determination, because we are not our own chusers; and the least expression of favour from God is not debt, but kindness and grace.

We should be careful, therefore, to take our lot as it falls; and to look upon it, not as partiality but wisdom in him, when he keepeth down one, and setteth up another. He is the only competent judge
of

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 351

of what is fittest to be done; and the reasons of his providence are always great, though we cannot look through the veil to see them at every turn.

In all his proceedings he hath a regard to the beauty, order, and stability of his whole creation, and to the good of every part. And as this infers a necessity of constituting different states and conditions amongst mankind, that one may be subservient to another, and that all may be subservient to his glory; so it requires us, with all humility, to be contented with that place and condition, which God in his wisdom thinks to be most proper for us.

This is the true way of husbanding God's dispensations so, that we may be happy under them, how obscure soever our sphere, and how slender soever our fortunes are, if compared with theirs, whose pomp some have the vanity and the ill-nature to grumble at.

Happiness doth not reside only in stately mansions; nor indeed can it have access to
them,

them, unless a lowly heart be ready there to give it entertainment. It hath its abode with contentedness, wherever that dwells, though within a little door, under a low roof, with plain diet, and in an homely dress.

It is a contented mind that makes one happy indeed. And so, every one may be happy at home, if he will. It is but bounding his extravagant ambition, and being satisfied with his daily bread, and the thing is presently done.

And this an humble heart teacheth us to do, because the bread we have is of God's giving. We pray for it daily, or, at least, we should ; and because it is God's hand that reacheth it unto us, we should bless him for it. And when we receive it with thankfulness, and comfort, and pleasure of mind, an humble cottage, with contentment, is much better than the most sumptuous palace with uneasiness and vexation.

SUCH

SERM. XIX. *Humility how to be expressed.* 353

SUCH is the true nature of humility,
and such is the christian temper which our
blessed Saviour in all his discourses and
actions laboured to promote ; and especi-
ally in that astonishing instance of humility,
wherein he vouchsafed to wash his dis-
ciples' feet, leaving us an example, that
as he hath done, so should we do like-
wise.

S E R M O N XX.

Our Obligations to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

[From Bishop PATRICK's Christian Sacrifice.]

I COR. X. 16.

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not
the communion of the blood of Christ?
The bread which we break, is it not the
communion of the body of Christ?*

IT is obvious enough, that this passage must needs relate to the holy sacrament, which was instituted by our dying Saviour, as the everlasting memorial of his cross and passion. For what else can be meant by the *bread* here mentioned, what else by the *cup of blessing*,—but that very bread, and that very cup, which Christ himself first blessed, and appointed continually to be sanctified by prayer and
thank,

thanksgiving, as the commemorative signs of his crucified body, and his blood poured forth for the remission of sins?

And what else can be understood by *the communion of the body and blood of Christ* (of which the apostle here speaketh) but the communication and distribution of that bread and that cup, which when once consecrated to this use do significantly represent, and actually exhibit, the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper?

This therefore being taken for granted, I shall at this time, in discoursing upon these words, do these three things following:

I. I shall consider the *obligations* which we are under to practise this duty.

II. I shall consider the *ends and purposes* for which it was ordained. And,

III. I shall shew how to dispose ourselves for it, so as to partake thereof with *profit and pleasure*.

356 *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

I. I AM to consider the *obligations* which we are under to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And, The 1st obligation thereunto is this:—*That it is our Lord's express command*; to whose service we were solemnly devoted, when we were baptized.

It is the very last commandment which he gave before his death. When he was parting with his disciples, and taking his farewell of them (till he should see them again after his resurrection),—he left this charge with them, that they should do, as they had seen *him* do, just before he went away: As if he should say unto them,—This is the last supper we shall eat together in this world: I shall keep no more feasts with you, till we meet in heaven. But I would have you meet often, and feast together, upon my broken body, and my blood shed for you; according to the pattern which I now set before you. As you see me, take bread, give thanks, break it and give it to you, so do ye. This is my will and testament, if you have any respect to the words of a dying Master and Saviour;

Saviour; if you love me, and bear me in mind when I am gone from you, do not forget to do this in remembrance of me.

And what he said to *them*, we are to take as said to *us*; for St. *Paul* saith, this is to be done till his coming again. It is not a temporary command, like those given to *Moses*, but lays a perpetual obligation upon us;—till Christ, who appeared to put away sin by this sacrifice of himself (which we commemorate) shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation. A

2d obligation to our receiving of the sacrament is, that it is more than ordinarily a *proof of our love to Christ*. It is a command, whereby our love and affection to our blessed Redeemer is most especially tried and proved; one of the great reasons for performing it being our respect and regard to his will and pleasure. To most other duties in our religion there is something *in nature* to prompt us, or to shew us the reason of them. That we should be just, and merciful, and sober, and grateful, and the like, we can derive from a

reason within ourselves. But this duty, which I am speaking of, is one of the things for which the principal ground is, the divine commandment and appointment. The reason why we should do this is, because God hath especially commanded it. And therefore the doing of it is a piece of pure obedience, arising wholly out of our respect and affections to him and his injunctions. It being indeed *designed* for the keeping him in memory; his appointment of it for that purpose hath added a good reason to it; which doth mightily enforce our duty, if we have any love to the memory of so dear a Saviour, and desire to perpetuate the remembrance of so exceeding a love, and make it known to all succeeding generations.

By this it is apparent, that the thing which makes most men negligent of this duty is that which, if they considered rightly, should make them most zealously to desire it. Natural conscience not reproving them for not doing this, as it doth for injustice, cheating, lying, and such like sins, they live securely in the neglect of it.

But

But if the love of Christ were planted and deeply rooted in men's hearts, they would upon this very account be the more forward to do it; because it is a peculiar mark of a christian; a work proper to him alone; who is moved to this, not by nature and the common light of mankind, but purely by his religion, and devotion to his Saviour. For there is no part of divine service, in which he is interested so much as this. It is more properly christian worship than any other. All the world think their religion binds them to pray to God, to praise him, and give him thanks; but to acknowledge him, and render thanks to him by doing this, belongs only to the followers of Christ. A

3d obligation hereunto is, *the example of the first christians.*—Primitive use and practice upon this command of our Saviour's doth very much explain his intentions, and tell us the obligation of it. They who were taught by the apostles of our Lord, best understood the weight of this commandment; and truly they understood it so, that they did as constantly do this, as they did publicly meet together to pray, or to

hear; and as oft as they did eat and drink together in token of their love and friendship: Both which they did very frequently. In the church of *Jerusalem*, every day, as we read in the second chapter of the Acts, —*They continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart*: That is, after they had daily performed their common devotions with the Jews in the temple service, they went to their own houses to tender a more particular service to our Saviour, by doing this in remembrance of him, and keeping feasts of charity for the poor and needy.

At those meals it is manifest they forgot not this, which they took to be an exact imitation of Christ, who after the paschal supper instituted this holy sacrament.

And that it accompanied other parts of divine service, and christian duties, is as manifest from the same chapter, where we find *they continued stedfastly, or unweariedly, in bearing the apostles' instructions, in communicating to each other's necessities, in breaking of bread, and in prayers*; which
 expression

SERM. XX. *of the Lord's Supper.* 361

expression of *continuing stedfastly* denotes both the frequency of the action, and that they were not tired with it.

All which is sufficient to shew what a great affection they had to this duty, and in what high account it was among them; in that no assembly of christians, of whatsoever sort it was, could pass, wherein Christ's death was not remembered with thanksgiving and praise. The

Last obligation which I shall take notice of, to our receiving of the holy sacrament, is, *That it is the test and badge of our christian profession.*

Did we but seriously consider this one thing; that a principal end for which both this, and the other sacrament of baptism, was instituted, is,—that by these outward signs we might express our hearty consent to the new covenant made by Christ in his blood, and engage ourselves to stand to the terms and conditions of it,—we should be extremely afraid to refuse to come to this holy communion; because that is the same with refusing to be of his religion.

For

362 *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

For he that made the new covenant with us, and is the author of the christian religion, hath made these outward rites and solemnities to be the conditions, whereby they who are willing to enter into that covenant, and be of that religion, should express their agreement and submission to it, and openly declare that they own Christ to be the Lord, and will perform due obedience to every one of his commands; which when they have once done, they are to signify their continuance and steadfastness in that religion, to which by these means they have addicted themselves, by the repeated use of the same things; otherwise, they live as if they repented of the contract which they have made, and renounced our blessed Saviour, who hath made the doing this to be a special testimony of our devotion to him and his service.—This is a thing to be seriously considered, and might prevail much, were it laid to heart as it ought.

And so much concerning the *obligations* which we are under to receive the sacrament

SERM. XX. *of the Lord's Supper.* 363

ment of the Lord's Supper; and these will receive a still greater strength and weight, by considering the

II^d THING I proposed to discourse of, namely, *the ends and purposes for which it was ordained.*

If we be convinced by what hath been said, that we are as much bound to do this as we are to be christians, it will have a double effect upon us: First, that we shall endeavour to quicken and stir up ourselves to a serious and constant performance of this duty, by often pressing these considerations earnestly upon our consciences. In the next place, that we shall be very desirous to understand the full meaning, end, and use of this holy action; that so we may reap the profit which is therein designed to us.

One end and purpose whereof is this; namely, *That it should be unto us a divine and heavenly feast, appointed by our Lord, in commemoration of himself.*—That it is to be looked upon as a feast, or repast provided for us, the bread and wine, the eating

364 *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

eating and drinking, do sufficiently declare. But it is more fully expressed in the names of *breaking bread*, and of the *supper of the Lord*, which are given to this action.

And as it is expressly ordained to be in *remembrance* of our blessed Lord, so it is proper to observe, that it was no unusual thing in the world to institute feasts and entertainments to preserve the memory of famous persons. At which feasts, they discoursed of their memorable sayings, their worthy actions, their patient sufferings; and rehearsing the history of their life and death, excited themselves to tread in their steps. For this is the principal part of friendship; not to follow the dead with tears, but to remember his will, and to execute his commands.—Which is the general design of this heavenly feast; where we meet to preserve an eternal memory of our glorious Redeemer, and to fix more deeply in our minds all that he did and suffered for us; that thereby we may be disposed, with the greater cheerfulness, to perform his will, and obey his precepts.

Another

Another great end and design of this institution is, — *That it should be unto us an act of union with Christ.* — So much I observed before, that sacraments are outward rites and solemnities, to express our consent to the new covenant; and whereby we signify our settled purpose, and engage our faith, to perform the duties of christians, as ever we expect that Christ should be a Saviour to us. And this sacrament of the Lord's Supper is more particularly designed for that end; that by often doing this, we may, with repeated protestations of our fidelity, renew our baptismal vow and covenant, wherein we stand engaged; and in the most sacred manner, addict and devote ourselves again and again to that service which we promised, when we entered into Christ's religion.

Therefore, when we are making ourselves ready for this holy feast, let us always have *this* in our minds; that we are going to consecrate ourselves again to the obedience of Christ unto death: To renew our protestations of friendship with him, and confirm the covenant that is between
us :

366 *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

us: Utterly to disclaim all enmities and opposition to his will, and to profess ourselves heartily his disciples and followers: In short, to promise and vow, in the most sacred manner, that we will henceforth live unto him, and not to ourselves, and remain his servants in truth and fidelity for ever.

A third end and design of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, That as it is intended to be an act of union with Christ, so also to *be an act of union of christians one with another.*

This is a natural consequence of God's love towards us, in sending his son to die for our sins; that we might live through him; namely, If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. This is so certain a fruit of an hearty sense of God's merciful kindness to us, that no man ought to think he loves him, or hath any fellowship with him, or with his son our blessed Lord and Saviour, who doth not feel in himself an unfeigned affection and readiness to do good to all his christian brethren.

Let

Let us therefore, when we partake of the Table of the Lord, consider, that as thereby we are made one with Christ, so we are joined in the closest union one with another. And let us remember, when we are making ourselves ready for this heavenly feast, that as we are going to commemorate the dearest love of our Lord; and to profess our love to him, we ought to engage ourselves, to the heartiest love, towards all the members of the same body; to enter into a covenant one with another (as well as with him) by eating of the same bread, and drinking of the same cup; and that, as we all profess to be travelling unto the same place of happiness, we do not fall out by the way, much less hate, revile, or do despite and injuries one to another, but live for ever in the peace of God, in unity, and godly love.

These are some of the great ends and designs of this holy institution.

And that we may partake thereof with profit and pleasure unto ourselves, I proceed unto the

368: *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

III^d AND LAST thing I propos'd, which was, to shew how this may be done; that is, How to dispose ourselves, so as to partake thereof with profit and pleasure.

And *first*, when we see these symbols of Christ's body and blood, let us think that we behold the crucified Jesus represented to us; that we stand in his sight, and are in his company, yea, and hear him speak graciously to us, and calling us by the name of his chosen guests, his dear friends.

In the *next* place, Let us humbly acknowledge our unworthiness of so divine a presence, and confess our own vileness and sinfulness before him. Though we cannot, if we understand the nature of this feast, but come to it with an earnest desire and affection, yet still we must remember, that we are vile and miserable; and therefore, that our desires must be tempered with much modesty, lowliness, and humility of spirit.

Let us, in the *next* place, call to remembrance those sins, which are the causes of our fear, and which brought our Saviour
to

SERM. XX. *of the Lord's Supper.* 369

to his cross. Let us excite in our hearts an unfeigned *sorrow* and grief, that he hath been so affronted and wronged, by us and all the world. Let us declare freely the sense of our hearts to him, and let him know by an humble confession, how the case stands with us.

From hence, Let us *proceed* to stir up in ourselves the greatest *hatred* against our sins, and all the wickedness that hath overspread the world; which nothing can so effectually demonstrate to be odious and intolerable as this, that it hath made the nature of man capable to act such a villany, as to put to death, after a most shameful manner, the most innocent and harmless, nay, the most loving and kind, the most obliging and charitable person that ever was.

And then, Let us excite in our hearts the mightiest *sense of his love*, which as it is never to be forgotten, so here it is more particularly to be pondered, and affectionately commemorated.

And *then*, Feeling the flames of his love in our hearts, it will be a fit time to offer

370 *Our Obligations to the Sacrament*

up ourselves intirely in the greatest devotion to his service. Let us pray unto him, to accept of a poor sacrifice now at our hand. Though it be worth nothing at all, yet let us intreat him to receive it, since it is the offering of the heartiest affection to him.

And for that purpose let us engage ourselves in a covenant to him, that we will never rob him any more of that which we have so solemnly offered to him.

And then, Let us humbly beg leave of him, that we may believe in his name for the remission of sin; and beg of him his mighty grace to confirm us in our resolution, that so we may alway maintain in our souls this hope of his pardoning love.

And because it is natural that there should be joy at a feast, Let us conclude all in praises to our Lord, and rejoyce in his holy name.

Thus if we did converse with him, and such holy communication did heartily pass between us, it would be so pleasant and delightful, that we should cry out, as the Jews did in another case, *Lord, evermore*
give

SERM. XX. *of the Lord's Supper.* 371

give us this bread. We should long for such another repast, and be desirous every day to wait on him at his table; at least, we should heartily embrace the next invitation that he gives us to come unto it. And because we cannot every day do this in remembrance of him, we should secretly retire unto him in our own hearts, as into his holy temple; and there call to mind what he hath done unto us, commemorate his love, maintain our acquaintance, preserve our friendship, and renew to him our vows, that by all these ways we may prepare ourselves for his fellowship and society in the eternal world which is to come.

S E R M O N XXI.

Self-examination before the Communion.

[From Bishop TAYLOR's Communicant.]

I COR. XI. 28.

Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

IT is a matter of very great concernment to us, in what manner we come prepared to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Our duty herein is generally expressed to us in these words which I have now read unto you ; but what this examination is, and in what particular instances it is chiefly to be exercised, is not always sufficiently considered or understood. Although men are well enough satisfied of the great importance and necessity of self-examination, in order to their
worthy

worthy receiving, yet they do not go to the bottom of this matter, and reflect what this examination doth properly signify: Only, in general, they consider that they are commanded by the apostle in my text, *to examine themselves*; and *that*, according to the common notions of the world, is easily done; that it is only asking ourselves a few plain questions,—Do we *believe*? Do we *repent*? And are we *in charity*? And to these the answers are ready enough; we do *believe*, that Christ gave his body and blood for us, as for all mankind, and that Christ is mystically present in the sacrament; we have been taught so all our lives, and we have no reason to doubt of it.—We do also *repent*, according to the measures we are taught; we are sorry we have sinned; we wish we had not done it; and we promise to do so no more; and this we do constantly before every communion; and before the next comes, perhaps we have reason enough to renew our resolutions; and although it may be we were never so good as our word, yet nevertheless now we resolve we will.—

We are also in *charity* with all the world; and, against this good time, we pray to God to forgive them; for *we* do.

This is the usual examination of consciences. To which men do sometimes add a day or two of humiliation; and on that, say more prayers than usual, and read some good discourses of the sacrament, and then think themselves dressed like the friends of the bridegroom, and with great hope and expectation come to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

But this examination hath itself need to be examined. A due preparation is not so short a work as this comes to. For although our duty herein is contained in this one word *examine*, it being, after the manner of mysteries, mysteriously described, yet there is great reason to believe, that there is in it very much of duty, and therefore let us search into the strict and proper meaning of it.

Now it signifies to *try*, and to *search*; to enter into the *depths* and *secrets* of any thing; and is taken from the triers of gold, which is tried by the touchstone, or by

by fire, in order to discover, whether it be true and genuine, or it be false and counterfeit.

Now we must try and examine ourselves, with the same exactness and diligence; and the touchstone or instrument, which we are to make use of for this purpose, is that of our constant demeanor and behaviour towards God and man. Our way to try, whether we be rightly prepared for this solemnity, is to be examined by our duty to God, and by a course and order of good works.

For examination is but a relative duty, and nothing of itself; for no man is the better for being examined, if being examined there follows nothing after it. He that is examined must be approved. And so the word is used by St. Paul: *Happy is he, that doth not condemn himself in that which he approveth.* The word signifies both to *examine* and to *prove*; that is, indeed, to examine as wise men should; it is all one, as to judge righteous judgment after due examination. And that is expressly added by the apostle, in this same

chapter of my text, after the precept of examination, *Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord*; that is, your examination of yourselves will prevent the horrors of God's judgments in the other world; your condemnation of your sins will prevent God's condemnation of you for them; and then, when you examine so as to judge, and so condemn your sins that you approve yourselves to God and your own consciences, then you have examined rightly.

But that we may understand this duty of examination the more perfectly, I will endeavour to set forth the *particular instances* in which it doth more especially consist.

And the

1st instance of self-examination is, *The examination of our desires and affections.*

Every one that comes to the holy sacrament must have earnest affections and desires towards God and religion, and particularly towards those divine mysteries; and therefore he must examine accordingly, whether or no he be willing and earnestly

earnestly desirous to do all his duty. His *saying* that he is so, is not a sufficient satisfaction to a serious inquiry, unless he really feels himself to be so. For we find, that all men pretend that they have earnest desires to be saved; and very many, observing the beauties of virtue, the charms of innocence, the health of temperance, the peace of meek persons, and the reputation and joy of the charitable,—wish that they were such excellent persons. But they consider not, that it is the splendor, not the virtue, which they admire; the reputation, not the usefulness,—the reward, and not the duty, which they are in love withal.

Our desires of holiness are too often like our desires of phyfic; an hard and fatal necessity, which we only chuse, rather than that which is worse; but this can never make our duty pleasant. We can never be heartily reconciled to the things of God, so long as we are uneasy in the offices of religion. In such a case, we may be said to *suffer* religion, and to *endure* the laws of God, but we *love* them not.

He

He that comes to God, whether he will or no, confesses the greatness of God, and the demonstrations of religion, but sees no loveliness in it, and shall find as little of the reward.

It is true, that *force* and *fear* may bring us unto God, and the fear of the Lord is said to be the beginning of wisdom; and Christ said, *Compel* them to enter; and our natural needs, and our worldly calamities, may force us to run to God, and affright us into religion as into a sanctuary; but then, if we enter at this door, we must examine whether we be taken with the beauties of the place. If holy desires and love be not in the beginning, or in the progression, we shall do the work of grace but meanly, our preparations will be cold, our attention weak, and we shall receive the sacrament without effect.

Now concerning our desires, we shall best judge of them by the proper effects and significations thereof.

Are our affections warm and earnest, inquisitive and longing, interested and concerned, in the things of God? Do we set
a high

a high value upon these mysteries, and love to partake of them, and desire them reasonably; and not without very great cause omit the opportunities which the church hath appointed to receive them? And would we receive them oftener than the church hath appointed, if we had opportunity? For he that only communicates, when he is commanded, communicates in *obedience*, but not in *love*; at least, we cannot so well be sure, that we are earnest enough, and have love enough to those mysteries, when the law of men, and not the love of God, is the measure of our duty.

And further; Besides this coming upon necessity,—our desires are very much to be suspected, if *compliance*, and *custom*, or *reputation*, be the ingredients, and prevail above any better motive. Those persons which come upon such inducements are by our blessed Saviour signified, by the parable of the corn that fell by the highway: They presently receive it with joy, and it springs quickly if the sun shines; but when temptation cometh, they hang the head,
and

and slacken their pace, and appear seldom, and shew that they had no depth of root. As long as their religion stays at this port, it is good for nothing, and the entry itself is suspicious; but if it pass on, to create an effective and material love, it will be well at last.

Again; They that are *easily hindered* from communicating, and apt to excuse themselves from the solemnity; these men have just cause to suspect their desires to be too cold and languid. They that are not desirous to use all opportunities, and to take all advantages, and long for all the benefits of this ordinance,—want very much of that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God, which is fulfilled in these mysteries, and to which Christ hath promised such ample satisfaction.

I do not say, that every man is bound to communicate every time that he can, and that it is a sin, not to desire it so often as it is in our power; but he that refuseth this duty when he hath opportunity, when his circumstances are fitting, when by the measures of piety and religion it is decent and

and useful for him to do it; that man is guilty of a criminal indifference, and when he does come, may fear that he hath not spiritual hunger enough for so divine a banquet.

Again; They that in their preparation take the *least measures* that are practised or allowed, and rest there and increase not, have neither value for the sacrament, nor desires of the blessing, nor expectations of any fruit, and therefore cannot have this holy appetite in due proportion, because they see no sufficient moving cause; and they look for little, and find less, and therefore can never be true desirers. For he that thinks there is no great matter in it, will have no great desire of it; and he that will do no great matter for it, certainly expects no great excellency in it. And such are all they that take the least measures of preparation; who therefore shall find the least measures of blessing; and in spiritual things, that which is called positively the least, is just none at all; and he that shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, shall be quite shut out.—

Concerning

Concerning this, therefore, we are first to examine ourselves. Upon the account of our earnest desires, it is seasonable to inquire, whether to communicate frequently be an instance of that *holy desire* which we ought to have to these sacred mysteries.

II. He that desires to communicate worthily must examine himself, as to this point, *Whether or no there is in him any affection to sin remaining?*

When the heathens offered a sacrifice to their false gods, they were wont to make a severe search, to see if there were any crookedness or spot, any uncleanness or deformity, in their sacrifice. And the observation which one of the ancient fathers makes upon these sacrificial rites is pertinent to this rule: When your impure worshippers look after a pure sacrifice, says he, why do they not rather inquire into their own hearts? In short, the rites of sacrifices were but the admonitions of duty. And the inquiry into the purity of the beast was but a precept represented in ceremony and figure, commanding us to
take

take care, that the man be not less perfect and pure than the beast; for if an unclean man brings a clean sacrifice, the sacrifice shall not cleanse the man, but the man will pollute the sacrifice. Let them bring to God a soul pure and spotless; lest when God espieth a soul humbly lying before the altar, and finds it to be polluted with a remaining sin, he turn away his head, and hate the sacrifice.

And God, who taught the sons of *Israel* in figures and shadows, and required the Levitical priests to come to God clean and whole, straight and with perfect bodies, meant to tell us, that this bodily precept in a *carnal* law doth in a *spiritual* religion signify a *spiritual* purity.

Here therefore it concerns us to examine ourselves strictly. Do we come to the communion, purified from the pollution of sin? Have we repented effectually, and in good earnest? Have we been heartily sorry for our sins? Hath our sorrow wrought in us an hatred of them? Do we so hate them, that we have left them? And have

we

we so left them, that we have left them *all*; and will we do so for ever?

The best sign, whereby we can reasonably suppose all affection to sin to be gone, is, if we really believe that we shall never any more commit that sin, to which we are most tempted, and most inclined, and by which we do most frequently fall.

When a man examines himself, he cannot but remember how often he hath sinned in divers instances; but now, he says, he will do so no more. If he had never said so, and failed, it might have been more likely. But the sun doth not rise and set, perhaps, so often, as he hath sinned, and broken all his holy vows. And the reason of it is this: Sin looks deformed, after it hath been committed. And when a man hath lost his innocence, and his peace, for nothing but the exchange of shame and indignation, he is vexed, and peevish, and unsatisfied, and then he resolveth he will sin no more.

But this is all a delusion; for he only desires it not, because for the present the
appetite

appetite to it is gone. But let him place himself by reflection and consideration, in the circumstances of his former temptation, and then is the time to examine himself, whether his resolution is likely to hold out.

In order to this, let us examine ourselves, whether there be in us any good principle, stronger than all the arguments and flatteries of our sin. But above all things, let us examine whether there be not in us this principle,—That if we do sin again, in great temptation, we will and may repent again. I say, let us take heed of this above all things: For it is certain, no man lives in the regions of temptation, to whom sin can seem pleasant, but he will fall when the temptation comes strongly, if he have this principle within him, that though he do commit that sin, he may and will repent: For then sin hath got an advocate within him. If we think that we can so order it, that we shall be as sure of heaven, though we do this sin, as though we do it not, we can have no security; our resolutions are good for nothing

at all, and will last no longer, than till the next temptation falls upon them.

The

III. and last thing I shall mention, wherein we are to examine ourselves, in order to a holy communion, is concerning our *prayers*.

The holy sacrament is, in its nature and design, a solemn prayer, and the imitation of the intercession which our glorious High Priest maketh for us in heaven. And therefore, in order to do this work as we ought to do, it were very fit that we examine ourselves a little as to this matter.

For there are many great and excellent promises made to prayer; and nothing more disposeth us, to receive the grace of the sacraments, and the blessings of communion, than holy prayer; prayer can obtain every thing; can open the windows of heaven, and shut the gates of hell; can put an holy restraint upon God, and detain an angel till he leave a blessing; can open the treasures of rain, and soften the iron ribs of rocks, till they melt into drops and a flowing river; can unclasp the girdles of the

the north, saying to the frozen mountain, be thou removed hence, and cast into the bottom of the sea; can arrest the sun in the midst of his course, and send the swift winged winds upon our errand; and all those strange things, and secret decrees, and unrevealed transactions, which are above the clouds, and far beyond the regions of the stars, shall combine in ministry and advantages for the praying man.—It cannot be therefore but we should feel less evil, and much more good than we do, if our prayers were right.

But the state of things is thus: It is an easy duty, and there are many promises, and we do it often, and yet prevail but little. Is it not a strange thing, that our friends die round about us, and in every family some great evil often happens; and a church shall suffer persecution for many years together, without remedy; and a poor man groans under his oppressor, who is still prosperous; and we cannot rescue the life of a servant from his fatal grave; and still we pray, and do not change the course of providence in a single instance,

whether the instance be of little or great concernment?

Now what is the matter? We patiently suffer ourselves to be rejected, and comfort ourselves by saying, that it may be the thing is not fit for us, it is against the decree of God, or against our good, or to be denied is better; and there is a secret order of things and events, to which a denial doth better minister than a concession. This is very true, but not always when we are denied; for it is not always in mercy, but in anger very often, we are denied, because our duty is ill performed. For if our prayers were right, the providence of God would often find out ways to reconcile his great ends with our great desires.

Now there are two great lines of duty, by which we can well examine ourselves in this particular:

And *one* of them is this: That our prayers be not the work of our *lips* only, but of our *hearts*; that is, that we heartily desire what we pray for. And God knows, this is not very common; for, besides that

we

we are not in love with the things of God, and have no worthy value for religion, there are many things in our prayer, which we ask for, and do not know what to do with if we had them; and we do not feel any want of them, and we care not whether we have them or no.

We ask for the *spirit of God*, for *wisdom*, and for a *right judgment in all things*, and yet there are not many, who use to trouble themselves at all with judging concerning the mysteries of godliness. Men pray for humility, and yet at the same time think it will do them no good. They pray for a *broken and contrite heart*; and yet if they chance to obtain it, they long to be comforted, and want to be rid of it. We pray sometimes, that *God may be first and last in all our thoughts*, and yet we conceive it no great matter whether he be or no, but we are sure that he *is not*; but the things of the world do take up the place of God, and yet we hope to be saved for all that, and consequently are very indifferent concerning the return of that prayer. We frequently call upon God for

his grace, that we may *never fall into sin*; now in this, besides that we have no hopes to be heard, and think it impossible to arrive to a state of life, in which we shall not commit sins, yet if we do sin, we know there is a remedy so ready, that we believe we are not much the worse if we do.

Here are *prayers* enough, but where are the *desires* all this while? We pray against *pride*, and *covetousness*; but nothing that we do, but is either pride or covetousness: We do covetous actions, and speak proud words, and have high thoughts, and do not earnestly desire to have affections contrary to them. And *whatever* our *prayers* are, yet it is certain our *desires* are so little, and so content with any thing of this nature, that for very many *spiritual* petitions, we are indifferent whether they be granted or not.

But if we are poor or persecuted, if we be in fear or danger, if we be sick or in distress, then we are true desirers of relief and mercy. We long for health, and desire earnestly to be safe. Then we pray, and *mind* what we do,

Therefore,

Therefore, let us *desire* what we pray for. For it is certain, that we shall pray earnestly, if we desire fervently.—

The *other* rule of examination with regard to our prayers is this; namely, To examine, *whether or no the form of our prayer be the rule of our life.*

Every petition to God is a precept to man. And when, in our devotions, we pray to be delivered from malice and hypocrisy, from pride and envy, from fornication and every deadly sin, all *that* is but a line of duty, and tells us that we must never consent to an act of pride, or a thought of envy, to a temptation of uncleanness, or the foulness and disguises of hypocrisy.

But when we pray against a sin, we think we have done enough; and if we ask for a grace, suppose there is no more required.

But now prayer is an instrument of help, a procuring assistances of God, that we may do our duty; and why should we ask for help, if we be not ourselves bound to do the thing?

Let us not therefore look upon our prayers as a short method of ease and salvation, but as a perpetual admonition of our duty: And by what we require of God, we see what he requires of us. And if we want a system, or collective body of holy precepts, we need no more but our book of common prayer. And if we look upon them first as *duties*, then as *prayers*, that is, things fit to be desired, and fit to be laboured for, our prayers will be much more useful, not so often vain, not so subject to illusion, not so destitute of effect, or so failing of the promises of God. The prayers of a christian must be like the devotions of the husbandman; that is, labour and prayer together.

Thus then we must examine—

Is desire the measure of our prayer? and is labour the fruit of our desire? If so, then what we ask we shall receive as the gift of God, and the reward of our labour. But unless this be the state of our prayer, we shall find that the receiving of the sacrament will be as ineffectual, because it will
be

be as imperfect, as our prayer. For prayer and communion differ but as *great* and *little*, in the same kind of duty. Communion is but a great, public, and solemn address and prayer to God through Jesus Christ; and if we do not our duty in the lesser, we shall not be intitled to the benefits of the greater; he that doth not pray holily and prosperously can never communicate acceptably.—Thus, therefore, *let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

S E R M O N XXII.

Sacrament: Preparation for it.

[From Bishop Taylor's Communicant.]

I COR. XI. 31.

*For if we would judge ourselves, we should
not be judged.*

THESE words are spoken on the occasion of receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The apostle would have a man first to *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; that is to say, he must diligently inquire, whether his life is such, as that he may worthily come to this heavenly feast; which is not a work of a day, or a week, or any such determinate time, but according to the general tenour and course of a man's life. He that would communicate worthily, must prepare himself by an
holy

holy life and conversation, by mortification of all his sins, and by the acquisition of all christian graces. So that the actual address, and proper preparation to the blessed sacrament, is indeed an inquiry whether we are habitually prepared; that is, whether we be in a state of grace, whether we belong to Christ, whether we have *faith* and *charity*, and whether we have *repented* truly.

For let us think of it as we please, there is no other preparation. And it might otherwise seem a wonder to us, why St. Paul, who particularly speaks of it in this chapter, and indeed why the whole New Testament, should say nothing of any particular preparation to this holy feast; but only gives us caution, that we do not receive it unworthily; but gives us no particular rule or precept but this one, That a man should *examine himself*, and so let him eat: I say, this might seem very strange, but that we find there is, and there can be no worthy preparation to it, but a life of holiness, and that every one who nameth the name of Christ shall depart from iniquity; and therefore, that

against the day of communion, there is nothing peculiarly and signally required, but to examine ourselves, to see if all be right in the whole; and what is wanting towards our proportion of perfection and ornament, to supply it; so that our immediate preparation to the holy communion can have in it but these two parts:

I. An examination of our conscience, of what we have done right or wrong.
And,

II. An actual supply of what is wanting.

And,

I. WE ought to *examine our consciences against the day of communion, of what we have done right or wrong.*

AND in order to this, Let us, *first*, consider *the greatness of the work that we go about*; that it is the highest mystery of our whole religion; that we spiritually partake of Christ himself in the sacrament; that as sure as any christian doth ever receive the spirit of God, so sure every good man
receiveth

receiveth Christ; that it is a real communion with him, to all material events of blessing and holiness; that now every communicant doth an act that will contribute very much to an happy or an unhappy eternity; that by this act, and the consequences thereof, a man may live or die for ever; that a man cannot at all be supposed in any state, that this thing will be indifferent to him in that state, but will set him forward to some very great event; that this is the greatest thing we can do in the world: And therefore, when we have considered these things in general, let us examine whether we be persons in any sense fitted to such glorious communications, and prepared by such dispositions, which the greatness of the mystery may in its appearance seem to require.

NEXT to this *general* consideration, let us examine ourselves concerning those things, in which we are or may be offensive to *others*. For although every man is to begin at home, yet that which is first to
be

be changed is that which is not only evil in itself, but afflictive to others; that which is *sin*, and *shame*; that which offends God, and our neighbour too; that is, it is criminal, and it is scandalous. Let us examine therefore ourselves about injuriousness, slander, peevish conversation, ungente nature, aptness to quarrel, and the like; for thus if we walk unblamably, and unreprouable before the world, certain it is, that we have purchased a good degree in the faith, and shall think our condition worth preserving, and worth improving.

In the *next* place, let us examine ourselves concerning all matters of *intercourse* and *dealings* amongst men, whether any unhandsome contract hath been made, any fraudulent bargain, any surprize or outwitting of the weaker, of our ignorant, or unwary brother. And whatever we do, let us place *that* right; for money is a snare; and in contracts we are of all things soonest deceived, and are very often wrong, and yet never think so, and we do every thing before we part with this. But when
every

every thing is set right here, we may hope better of other things; for either they are right, or will with less difficulty be made so.

LIKE unto this, for the matter of inquiry, is, that we examine ourselves as to what we *owe* unto others; whether we detain any thing otherwise than in justice we are obliged to do. Here we must examine, whether we are *able* to pay unto all what is due to them from us; and whether we are *willing*. And if we are not able, how much we can do towards it, and what amends we can make to them for the residue. And how we do intend to end that intercourse. For this at least ought to be so far stated, that we may be sure we do no injustice, and do no injury that we can avoid.—This is a material consideration, and of great effect unto the peace of conscience, and of a worthy disposition to the holy communion.

IN the *next* place, Let us examine ourselves, how we spend our *time*. Is it employed

employed in an honest calling; in worthy studies, in useful business, in something that is charitable; in any thing that is useful? For if we throw away great portions of it, of which we can give no sober account, although the laws chastise us not, and appoint no guardians to conduct our estates, as it does to fools and madmen, yet we are like to fall into severer hands,—and God will be angry. And they are very unfit to entertain Christ, who, when they have received his sacrament, resolve to dwell in idleness, and foolish diversions, and have no business but recreation. At the best, it is but a suspicious state of life, that can give no wise account to God, and to mankind.

In the next place, Let us examine ourselves in the particulars of our *relation to others*, especially where we govern and take account of others, and exact their faults, and are not so obnoxious to them, as they are to us. Princes, and great men, and parents, and husbands, and masters, think more things are lawful to them towards their

SERM. XXII. *Preparation for it.* 401

their inferiors, than indeed there are; and as they may easily transgress in discipline and reproof, so they very often fail in making provisions for the souls and bodies of their inferiors, and proceed with more confidence, and to greater progressions in evil, because they pass oftentimes without animadversion, or the notice of laws. These persons are not often answerable to their inferiors, but always *for* them: And therefore it were good, that we took great notice of it to ourselves, because few else do so.

IN the *next* place, Let us be sure, against a day of communion, to examine ourselves in those things, which no law condemns, but yet which are of *ill report*; such as are sumptuous and expensive clothing, beyond our degree; going often to taverns; fantastick following of fashions; inordinate extravagances, and living beyond our means: In these, and the like, we must take our measures, by a proportion to the prudence and severity of the christian religion, and by observation of the customs

and usages of the best and wisest persons, in every condition of men and women. For that we do things which are of good report, is a precept of the apostle; and, as by a little illness in the body, so by the smallest indispositions in the soul, if they be proceeded in, we may finish the method of an eternal death. And these things, although when they are argued, may by plausible pretences be represented in themselves as innocent, yet they proceed from an evil and unsafe principle, and not from a spirit fitted to dwell with Christ, and to live upon sacraments and the secret participations of the divine spirit.

AGAIN, in the next place, Let us further examine ourselves in such actions, which are condemned by the laws of God and man respectively, but are not defined, and the guilty person cannot in many cases be convicted. Such as are *pride* and *covetousness*. For when outward actions can proceed from many principles, as an *haughty gait* from *pride*, or from an ill *habit of body*, or from *imitation*, or *carelessness*,

SERM. XXII. *Preparation for it.* 403

lessness, or *humour*, it will be hard for any man to say, that such an one is *proud* from the manner of his bodily gesture; and who can say, that such a degree of *care* and *thriftiness*, in another man's case and circumstances, is *covetousness*? Here, as we must be gentle to others, so we must be severe to ourselves; and not only condemn the very first entrances of an infant sin, but suspect its approaches, and acknowledge a fault before it be certain and evident.

IN THESE things we must the rather examine ourselves, because we can be the most certain accusers of ourselves; and the inquiries are of great concernment, because they are *that* curiosity of piety, and security of condition, which becomes persons of growth in grace, and such as are properly fitted to the communion. And indeed they are of all things most commonly neglected. Men usually live at that rate, that if they be not scandalous, they suppose themselves to be great proficient

in grace, and fitted for the nearest intercourse with Christ.

These instances of examination do suppose, that we have already examined ourselves concerning all *habits* of sin, and laid aside every discernible *weight*, and repented of every *observed criminal* action; and broken every custom of lesser irregularities, and are reformed by the measures of the laws and express commandments of Christ, and are changed from death unto life; and that we are persons so far advanced, that we need not to regard what is behind, but to press forwards towards the state of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. For he that is in that state of things, that he is to examine how many gross sins he hath committed since the last communion, will have something else to do, besides the examining of his conscience, namely, to *repent* of them heartily and sincerely, with the utmost diligence and care; otherwise, as he will be unfit to die, so he will be also unfit to communicate.

BUT

BUT so much may suffice concerning my former particular, namely, *the examining of our consciences as to what we have done well or ill.*

The

(II.) Other part of preparation against the day of communion, which I proposed to discourse of, is concerning *an actual supply to be made of such actions and degrees of good as are wanting.*

If on a communion day we need very much examination, we can make but little supply of those many defects, which it is likely a diligent inquiry will discover; and therefore it is highly advisable, that as we ought to *repent* every day, and not put it all off till the day of our communion, or our death, so we should every day *examine ourselves.* And indeed, the oftener we recollect ourselves, the better. For thereby the more weaknesses we shall observe; the more faults we shall correct; and watch the better; and repent the more perfectly; and offend the less; and be the more prepared for death; and be more

humble; and shall with ease prevent the contracting of evil habits; and shall interrupt the union of little sins into a chain of death; and shall more readily prevail upon our passions; and better understand ourselves; and more frequently converse with God; and oftener pray; and have a more heavenly conversation; and, in short, be more fitted for a frequent and holy communion.

The end of examination is, That we grieve for all our sins; that we resolve to amend all; that we actually pray against all. Therefore it is necessary, that when we have examined against a communion day, we do acts of contrition for every thing we have observed to be amiss; that we renew our resolutions of better obedience; and that we pray for particular strength against our failings.

He that would communicate with advantage must so have ordered his examinations, that he must not always be in the same method. His examinations must be made full, and thoroughly, and be productive of inferior resolutions, and must pass

pass on to rules and exercises of caution. That is, We must consider where we fail ofteneſt; from what principle this default comes; what are the beſt remedies; and from thence paſs on, to the real and vigorous uſe of them.

If any paſſion, or evil affection, be the conſtant exerciſe, or temptation of our life, let us be careful to guard againſt it, reinforce our reſolutions, examine all our aids, obſerve what hath been ſucceſſful againſt it heretofore, and purſue that point. And hereunto, let this caution be added; that, of all things in the world, we be careful of relapſes into our old follies or infirmities; for if things do not ſucceed well afterwards, they were not well ordered at firſt.

Furthermore: Upon our days of preparation, let us endeavour to ſtir up every grace, which we are to exerciſe in our converſation, and thruſt ourſelves forward in zeal of thoſe graces; that we begin to amend our backwardneſs, and repair our ſins of omiſſion.

To this purpose let us compare day with day, week with week, communion with communion, and see if we can observe any advantage, any ground gotten of a passion, or any further degree of the spirit of mortification; and let us be sure to think, that we are not at all improved, unless we observe our defects to be fewer, or lighter, than they were before.

Especially, against the day of communion, let us endeavour to put our souls into that order and state of good things, as if that day we were to die; and consider, that unless we dare to die upon that day, if God should call us, we are unfit to communicate. And without being in such a state and posture, we are unsafe in every condition of life. But he that communicates worthily is justified from sin; and to him death can have no sting, to whom the sacrament brings life and health. And therefore, let every one that is to communicate, place himself by meditation in the gates of death, and suppose himself seated before the tribunal of God's judgment,

ment, and see whether he can reasonably hope, that his sins are pardoned, and cured, and extinguished. And then, if he judge righteous judgment, he will soon perceive what is most criminal, what makes him most afraid, and what is least mortified, and so he will learn to make provision accordingly.

And if we find any thing yet amiss, or remaining to evil purposes, let us resolve to use some *general* instrument of piety or repentance, that may, by being useful in all the parts of our life and conversation, oppose every irregularity and disorder. Let us have the presence of God frequently in our thoughts. Let us endeavour to have so great a dread and reverence of God, that we may be more ashamed, and really troubled and confounded, to sin in the presence of God, than in the sight and observation of the best and severest man. Or let us firmly purpose in every thing that is not well, not to stay a minute, but to repent instantly of it, severely to condemn it, and to do something at the first opportunity for amends; or let us meditate
often

often on the day of death, and the day of judgment.—By these, and the like instruments, the remains of sin will be destroyed in us, and we shall live the life of God and of Christ.

THESE exercises and measures will not seem many, and long, and tedious, if we consider that all of them are not to be used at all times, nor by every person ; but are instruments fitted to several necessities, and useful when they can do good, and to be used no longer. For he that uses these as he ought to do, that is, to effect the work of reformation upon his soul, may lay them all aside, according as his work is done. But if we would every day do *something* of this ; if we would every day prepare for the day of death, or which is of a like consideration, for the day of our communion ; if we would every night examine our past day, and set our things in order ; if we would have a perpetual intercourse and conversation with God ; or, which is better than all examinations in the world, if we would actually attend to every action
that

SERM. XXII. *Preparation for it.* 411

that we do, whilst we are doing of it, and consider the tendencies and consequences thereof, we should find, that upon the day of our communion we should have nothing to do, but to renew and perfect our graces, and from thenceforth to press forward to the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

SERMON XXIII.

Charity preparatory to the Sacrament.

[From Bishop TAYLOR's Communicant.]

I JOHN III. 14.

*We know that we have passed from death
unto life, because we love the brethren.*

ONE great instrument of preparation for the blessed sacrament is, that we be in love and charity with all men. It was love that first united men in societies; and it is love that must continue our communions. And God, who made all things by his power, doth preserve them by his love. Strifes, and dissensions, and wars, are God's greatest plagues amongst mankind. And therefore when, in this holy sacrament, he pours forth the greatest effusions of his love; he intends thereby

thereby to recommend unto us peace in all capacities, and in all dimensions, and to all purposes; and that they who come to this feast of love, should not be unkind to their brethren, quarrellsome with their neighbours, implacable to their enemies, apt to contentions, hard to be reconciled, soon angry, and with difficulty appeased; and that such persons are not duly prepared to come within that holy place, where God vouchsafeth his especial presence, where Christ (who is the great minister of peace) and the holy spirit of love, are present in mysterious symbols, and most gracious communications.

For although it be true, that God loveth us first, yet he will not continue to love us, or proceed in the methods of his kindness, unless we become like unto him, and love one another. For by our love and charity he will pardon us, and he will comfort us, and he will judge us, and he will save us. And it can never be well with us, till love that governs heaven itself be the director of all our actions, and all our passions.—*By this*, says the apostle in
my

my text, *we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*

*I was hungry, and ye fed me; I was hungry, and ye fed me not:—*These will be the rules of our final judgment. *If ye love me, says our Saviour, keep my commandments: That is the measure of our obedience.—In that ye have done kindness, says he, to one of these little ones, ye have done it unto me: That is the installing of the saints in their thrones of glory.—If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, says he, leave it there; go and be reconciled to thy brother: That is the great instrument of our being accepted.—No man can love God, says St. John, and hateth his brother: That is the rule of our examination in this particular.—This is a new commandment, says our Saviour, that ye love one another: There is the great precept of the gospel.—And to sum up all, Love, says St. John, is the fulfilling of the law: That is the excellency and perfection of a man; and there is the expectation of all reward, and the doing all our duty, and the sanctification of every action, and the spirit*

spirit of life : It is the heart, and the fire, and the salt of every sacrifice : It is the crown and perfection of every communion. And all this mysterious excellency is perfectly represented by that divine exhortation made by St. Paul : *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast ; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Now concerning this grace, if we will inquire after it, in order to a worthy receiving the holy communion, we must inquire after the *effects* and *offices* of charity ; and by the good we do, or are ready to do, take an account of ourselves in this particular.

Now the offices and general duties of charity are these three : *Doing good ;—Speaking good ;* and, — *Forgiving evil.*

And first, as to *Doing good.*—He that loveth a man will be ready to do him good ;

good; for until love be beneficial, it is not another's good, but a man's own fancy and pleasure, that delighteth him.

We are not to examine this duty, by our *alms* alone; for although almsgiving is an excellent instrument of life, yet there are some who are bountiful to the poor, and yet not charitable to their neighbour. We can best tell whether we have charity to our neighbour, by our willingness to oblige him, and do him real benefit, and keeping him from all harm we can. Do we do good to all we can? Are we willing to give friendly counsel? Do we readily excuse our neighbour's faults? Do we rejoice when he is made glad? Do we delight in his honour and prosperity? Do we stop his entry into folly and shame? Are we not pleased at his miscarriages? Do we stand ready in mind to do all good offices to all that we shall converse with? For nothing makes societies so fair and lasting, as the mutual endearment of each other by good offices; and never any man did a good turn to his brother, but one time or other himself did eat the fruit of it.

In

In all the sacrifices of the ancients, they were remarkably kind to one another; they invited their friends to partake of the sacrifice, and called them to a portion of pardon, that they might eat of *that* mercy, and *that* forgiveness, which they expected from their God. *Then* they sent portions to the absent; *then* they renewed leagues, and re-established peace, and made marriages, and joined families, and united hearts, and combined interests, by a thread and chain of mutual acts of kindness and endearment. And so should we, when we come to this holy sacrifice. We must consecrate our hearts to God; and divide our affections amongst our brethren; and heartily love all them, who feed upon the same Christ, who live by the same faith, who are entertained by the same hope, and are combined by the laws, and by the exercises of the same charity.—But this thing is so plain, that it doth not require to be enlarged upon.—All that needs to be said is this: That it is decent, and it is useful, and it is necessary,—that we be very kind, and very charitable, to all the members of

Christ; with whom we are joined in the union of the same body, and supported by the strength of the same nourishment, and blessed by influences from the same divine head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next to *doing* good, is *speaking* good.— If it be not in our *hands* to do well, it must be in our *hearts*; and the contrary must never be upon our *tongues*: We are sure we can speak *well*; or we can abstain from speaking *ill*. If it be otherwise with us, we are not duly prepared to communicate. God opens his mouth, and his heart, and his treasures to us in this holy sacrament, and calls us to drink of the fountain of living water; which we cannot worthily do, if our lips are polluted with the venom of slander and detraction. It cannot be imagined, that Christ, who never spake an ill word, should take us into his arms, and feast us at his table, and dwell in our hearts, when we make ourselves as unlike unto him as is possible.

We should easily acknowledge, that he who killed a man yesterday, and is like to
kill

kill another to-morrow, would not be this day worthy to communicate. Now, some persons had rather lose their *lives*, than lose their *reputation*; what then think we of *their* preparation to the holy communion, that make nothing of murdering their brother's or their sister's fame? that either invent evil stories falsely and maliciously, or believing them easily, report them quickly, and aggravate them spitefully, and scatter them diligently. He that delights to report evil things of another, that will not endure so much as to have him well spoken of, hath certainly but little kindness to him: He would very hardly die for him, or lay out great sums of money for him, that will not afford him the cheapest charity of a good word.

They who readily speak reproachfully of others destroy all the love and combinations of charity in the world; they ruin the excellency and peculiar privilege of mankind, whose nature it is to delight in society, and whose needs and nature make it necessary. Slander and reproach, and speaking evil one of another, poisons love,

and brings in hatred, and corrupts friendship, and tempts the strongest virtue by anger to pass unto revenge. For an evil tongue is a perpetual storm; it is a daily temptation, and no virtue can without a miracle withstand it. A *single* injury is oftentimes entertained with christian patience; but he that loves to do injury by evil speaking, doth it in all companies, and takes all occasions, and brings it in by violence, and urges it rudely; till patience being weary goes away, and charity departeth with it, and leaves the place unto anger and revenge.

And no man sinneth *singly* in such instances as these. Some men commit one sin, and perhaps never commit it again afterwards; but repent of it speedily, and never again return to folly: But an evil and an uncharitable tongue is an accursed principle; it is in its very nature and original equal to an evil *habit*; it enters without temptation, and dwells in every part of our conversation, and injures every person whom it hath to deal with.

But

But I am not now to speak of it, as it is injurious to our neighbour, but as it tends to unfit us for the holy communion. The mouth that speaketh perverse things; the more that it doth so, the more it is unfit to partake of these holy mysteries. Christ enters not into those lips, from whence slander and evil discourses do proceed; and the tongue that loves to dispraise his brother, cannot worthily celebrate the praises, and speak of the glorious things of God. In short, An injurious talker is an habitual sinner; and he that doth not learn the discipline of the tongue, cannot be imagined to have any great share of the charity of Christ, or be supposed to be in any reasonable manner fitted, to partake of the blessings of the peaceful sacrament. But a good man will be as careful of the reputation, as of the life, of his brother; and to be apt to speak well of all men, is a sign of a charitable and a good man; and *that* goes a great way in our preparation to a worthy communion.

But I observed further, That the offices of charity do consist, not only in *doing good*, and *speaking good*, but also in *forgiving evil*.

And this duty is expressed to us by our Saviour, not only as obligatory upon us in general, but with a particular relation to the holy sacrament, in these words: *When thou bringest thy gift to the altar, says he, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, and go, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* And in another place he says, *When ye stand praying, if ye have any thing against any man, forgive him, that your father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*—And so he taught us to pray, that we might daily remind ourselves of this duty, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Let us consider what we do, and consider what we say. Do we desire to be forgiven no otherwise? Do we not exact every little ignorance, and grow warm at every

every mistake? And are we not angry at an unavoidable chance? Would we have God to do so to us, and forgive us in no other manner, than as *we* do; that is, turn his anger into every shape, and smite us in every part? Or would we have God pardon us only for little things, for a rash word, or an idle hour spent with less care and caution?—If *we* do so to our brother, it is a great matter. But if he reviles us, and dishonours us, or smites us on the face,—What then?—*We* rob God of his honour, *we* despise his religion, and neglect his service: It is certain, we do not usually forgive things of this nature to our brother: What then will become of our prayer? And what will be the effect of our communion?

And yet it is certain, there is nothing in the world easier than to forgive an injury. It costs us nothing, after it hath been once suffered. And if our passions, and foolish principles, would give us leave to understand it, the precise duty of forgiveness is a perfect *negative*; that is to say, it is

a letting things alone as they are, and making no more evils in the world, in which there was already one too many, even that which we did suffer.

But this duty, and the great reasonableness and necessity thereof, I shall represent in the excellent words of the son of Sirach: *He that revengeth shall find vengeance of the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven, when thou prayest. One man keepeth anger against another, and doth he seek healing from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy to a man that is like himself; and doth he ask forgiveness for his own sins? If he that is but flesh nourish hatred, who will intreat for pardon of his sins?—* The duty is plain, and the reason urgent, and the commandment express, and the threatening terrible, and the promise excellent.—There is in this no more to be said, but that we consider concerning the manner of reducing it to practice, in order
to

to our preparation to a worthy communion.—And,

1. Of all, therefore, *We are bound to forgive every man that offends us.* For concerning every one of our brethren, it is equally true, that he is the creature of God, that he is our brother, heir of the same hopes, and born to the same inheritance; that there are in him many good things, for which he may be loved; and many reasons in him for which he ought to be pardoned. God taketh an especial care of him, and the angels minister unto him, and Christ died for him, and his soul is very precious in the eyes of God.

2. Not only every man, but every offence, must be forgiven. The wise man says, *That for some things, there will be no returning again.* A blow indeed, or an evil word, may be pardoned. But *for upbraiding, (he says) and pride, and disclosing secrets, and a treacherous wound, every friend will depart, and never return again.* But he only tells how it will be, not what ought to be; what is likely to be in matter of fact, not how it should be in case of conscience:

science: And he means this of societies, and worldly friendships: But, in religion, we must go higher; and even these also, and greater than these must be pardoned; unless we would prescribe a limit to God's mercy, in the forgiveness of our own sins.

In these things, indeed, there is no difficulty; yet in the intention and expressions of this duty there is some. For if it be inquired, what is meant by forgiving, many men suppose it is nothing but saying, *I forgive him with all my heart, and I pray God forgive him*: But this is but words, and we must have more material significations of it than so, because nothing can atone for the omission of the necessary parts of this duty. Therefore I lay down this, as a

3d rule: Every man that hath received injuries, be they never so great, must have a mind perfectly free from all intentions of *revenge*, in any instance whatsoever. For when the question is, concerning forgiving him that did the wrong, every man can best answer this question, by placing himself

himself in the seat of him that did the offence, and considering to what purposes, and by what significations, and in what degrees, and to what event of things, himself would fain be pardoned, if he were in his case, and did repent the injury, and did desire pardon. That is the measure, and the rule. We are sinful men; and we would that God and man should always forgive us. Therefore let us forgive always; so much, so often, so entirely, as we would be pardoned ourselves.

4. He that is injured must so pardon, as that *he must not "pray to God" to take revenge of his enemy.* Nothing is more against the nobleness of a christian spirit, and the nature of the holy communion, than when all meet together, to pray for all, and all for every one, that any man should except his enemy; that he who prays for blessings to the whole mystical body of Christ, should secretly desire that any one member should perish.

5. He that means to communicate worthily, must *so forgive his enemy, as never to upbraid his crime any more.* For we must

so

so forgive, as that we *forget* it; not in the sense of nature, but perfectly in the sense of charity. For to what good purpose can any man keep a record of an ill turn, but to become a spy upon the actions of his enemy, watchful to do him shame, or by that to aggravate every new offence.

Again: He that would communicate worthily, must so pardon his enemy, that though he be certain the man is in the wrong, and sinned against God in the cause, yet he must not, under pretence of righting God and religion and the laws, pursue his own anger and revenge, and bring him to evil. Every man is concerned, that evil be to him that loves it; but we may deceive ourselves by thinking, that we have nothing to do to pardon God's enemies, and vile persons. It is true we have not; but neither hath any private man any thing to do to *punish* them: But he that cannot pardon God's enemy, can pray to God that *he* would; and it were better to let it all alone, than to destroy charity upon pretence of justice or religion. For if this wicked man were our friend, it may be

very

very well supposed, that we would be very kind to him, though he were God's enemy; and we are easy enough to think well of him that pleaseth us, let him displease whom he list besides.

Lastly; He that would communicate worthily, must *so pardon his enemy, as that he endeavour to make him to be his friend.* Are you ready to do him good? Can you relieve your enemy, if he were in want? Yes, it may be you can, and you wish it were come to that. And some men will pursue their enemies with implacable prosecutions, till they have got them under their feet; and then they delight to lift them' up, and to speak kindly to the man, and forgive him with all the nobleness and bravery in the world. But let us take heed, lest, instead of shewing mercy, we make a triumph. We ought to relieve his need, but should be troubled withal that he needs it. We ought to rescue him from the calamity, which he hath brought upon himself, or is fallen into by misadventure; but never to thrust him down,
that

that we may be honoured and glorious by raising him up again.

To conclude; Let us, in this whole matter, set before us the example of our blessed Saviour. He despised not the poor, nor refused the returning sinner. He pardoned the thief, when he confessed his sin; and accepted the Syro-phœnician woman, when she prayed. He did not reject him that sate at the receipt of custom; nor the humble publican; nor the disciple that denied him; nor them that persecuted his disciples; no, nor them that crucified himself.

Let us go, and do likewise: Enlivening our charity with the remembrance of his; and transcribing his example into our lives and conversations.

S E R M O N XXIV.

A Discourse on Drunkenness.

[By the Author of this Compilation.]

MATT. XVII. 15.

Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore-vexed; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

TH E S E words are a lively emblem of that which I propose to make the subject of my following discourse. They are spoken of one who was actually possessed with the devil; and may very properly be applied to describe a madness near of kin to this, and which differs from it in the time of its continuance more than any thing else; and that is, the sin of drunkenness. For whilst a man is possessed of this vice, he is as ungovernable,

as frantic, and as much out of his wits, as this lunatic was in my text; and *oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

In discoursing upon this vice, I propose to do three things:

I. I shall state and explain the *nature* of it.

II. I shall offer some *arguments* against it. And,

III. I shall add a word or two by way of *advice* and *direction*, touching our conduct concerning it.

I. I AM to state and explain the *nature* of it. I need not, in order hereunto, to give a regular definition, or an elaborate description, of this vice of drunkenness. It is not so much a stranger in the world, but every one knows it well enough who sees it; except only perhaps the person himself who is possessed of it. But, in speaking against this vice, I would not be understood, in the
1st place, to condemn a free and liberal use of any of the good things of this life.

God

God hath given us all things richly to enjoy; and every creature of God is good, if received in due measure and proportion, with thankfulness and gratitude to God the donor. It is not freedom, but slavery, which is the vice; not the use of these things, but the abuse of them; when, instead of our having a command over the creatures, they assume the command over us; when we set our hearts too much upon them; when we follow after them with greediness and anxiety, and are not satisfied with that share of them which nature and reason prescribe; when we are not contented to be men, as God hath made us, but will needs be beasts, or things inanimate; when we stupefy our senses and understanding, and render ourselves incapable to discharge the functions of social life and happiness; when by grasping at too much we lose all, and, by too deep a draught of sensual pleasure, deprive ourselves of the capacity of enjoying it.

St. Paul adviseth Timothy to drink a little wine for his health's sake; and even our Saviour himself vouchsafed to be pre-

sent at feasts and entertainments; and when they wanted wine, wrought a miracle to procure it.

Therefore, a decent, and cheerful, and even liberal use of the things of this life, is by no means to be condemned as unlawful and prohibited. Neither,

2dly, Would I call that man a drunkard, who is sometimes, though but rarely, overcome with an excess of liquor. Whilst we are men, we must expect to be liable to weakneses and failings. But a good man, if he is once overtaken, will be careful that he offend not in the like manner again. But the behaviour I would condemn, is an habitual immoderate excess in drinking: When a man makes it his constant or frequent practice to be intoxicated; who liveth as it were half man, half beast; now in his senses, and the next favourable opportunity again out of his wits. This is the drunkard whom I mean to take to task, and do proceed therefore, under my

II^d HEAD, to offer some arguments; whereby to put him out of countenance, if

possible, even with himself. And here, if I can shew that this vice is both *indecent*, *ill-mannered*, *impolitic*, *unreasonable*, *unjust*, and *impious*; that is to say, if arguments from every quarter can be brought against it, and on the contrary nothing considerable can be alleged in the defence of it; I think enough will be done to make all men ashamed of, and out of conceit with it. I shall endeavour therefore to make good these several charges against it, and shall take them in the order as I have placed them. And,

1. Drunkenness is *indecent*, or *ugly*. If any man, when he is cool and sober, will but suffer a drunkard to be presented before his eyes, he will presently be sick of the loathsome spectacle. It is an high compliment which Moses makes to human nature, in his history of God's formation of man, when he saith, *In the image of God created he him*: But how is this image defaced, and how doth he, who was made little lower than the angels, make himself hereby little above a fiend? It is a mortifying reflection upon our nature, that it

is capable of such baseness and deformity. It abasheth our pride, and brings down every high thought, to behold a creature, of the same stock and original with ourselves, debasing himself into the nature of a brute; *returning with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire*: To behold the swimming eyes and faltering tongue, the trembling limbs and distorted features, the horrid mien and rude deportment, of a creature endowed with a soul from heaven.

As *madness* is usually considered under two kinds, the *melancholy*, and the *frantic*, even so *drunkenness* divideth itself into these two species.

Behold, first, the *silly* drunkard, or madman. See his wistful looks, and wan complexion. Hear his love-laboured song, and tale told ten times over. Attend to his unmeaning importunity, and unutterable eloquence. And when he hath informed you of what mighty importance he is, what great man he is acquainted withal, and of what service he can be to you; tired out with labouring for the good of others,

others, he declines his head, and drowzes into a state of insensibility. There he lies a ghastly spectacle, nauseous even to his own companions; a derision to the meanest of mankind, and a prey to every invader.

Observe, next, the *frantic* madman. Behold his fiery eyes, and convulsed motion. Hear his swelling words, and inharmonious accent. Void of every becoming quality, he lays about him, without fear, and without mercy; overbearing truth with noise, and good advice with impudence; and disputing about nothing with as much vehemence, as if heaven and earth were concerned in the event of it; roaring conviction, and administering to himself dreadful oaths in confirmation of his absurdities.

We generally look upon this vice to be more peculiarly odious in the female sex; and one reason of it may be, to their great commendation, because in them we are not much habituated to the sight of it, and therefore in them it strikes us with its genuine loathsomeness: But undoubtedly,

another reason of this is, because from that sex we receive the idea of beauty; and the deformity is soonest discovered in the most amiable features. It sullies the fairest complexion, and rifles every charm. But the odiousness of it in itself is the same in both sexes, and certainly the more inexcusable in the stronger sex. It drowns the senses, enfeebles the nerves, perverts the will, darkens the understanding, and sows tares in the most fruitful imagination.

So far drunkenness is *indecent* or *unseemly*.

2. It is *ill-mannered*. A man that arrogates to himself more than his share of liquor, and consequently of the discourse, is not to be endured in civil company, and openly affronts every one that is soberer than himself. As he advanceth in drunkenness, he advanceth in rudeness to all that are below him; and if there is but one sober man in the company, he might as well be upon the rack, or in the breach of an enemy's wall; for he is sure to be
tortured

tortured and stunned to death with noise and barbarity. Nor is there any possibility of escaping: For he is beleagured from every quarter, and condemned to hear as much impertinence, as the tongue never-ceasing can utter.

Or if it do not proceed to these excesses, yet we unavoidably deprive him of that benefit of our conversation, which he might have otherwise enjoyed. And to render ourselves unfit for it, by pouring down our throats great quantities of liquor, is certainly an offence against politeness and good breeding, and shews that we value a draught of liquor, which perhaps is not worth six pence, more than we value our friend.

We put a direct cheat upon him; we bring him out of good company into that which is worse: He expected pleasure from our conversation, and possibly for the sake of that he associated himself with us, and we procure him pain. Instead of that agreeable society which he had reason to hope for, we either become no company for him at all, or, which is more likely,

we become that which is worse than none.
—Thus is drunkenness contrary to good manners,

3. It is also *impolitic*, or contrary to *prudence*. It is a sort of inverted hypocrisy. They do both put us under a disguise; but as hypocrisy endeavours to make us appear better than we really are, so this labours to make us appear worse. It shews us in a false mirror; not in that which flatters our pride, and makes us seem amiable; but in that which disfigures our countenance, and makes us look hideous.

As all borrowed ornaments are ungraceful, so those received from liquor are of all others the least becoming us. In our joys, it suffuseth an unnatural bloom upon our countenance; and in our sorrows, we shed tears *not our own*. And some perhaps may not have the opportunity to see us, but under this disguise; and then they will conceive a more unfavourable opinion of us, than upon the whole we may deserve.

Drunkenness

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkenness.* 441

Drunkenness is the parent of many other vices, and yet it is their enemy, and betrays its own offspring. If a guilty conscience is a thousand witnesses, drunkenness is ten thousand. That vice which hath long laid lurking in the soul, and hath resisted many rebukes and alarms of conscience, drunkenness at once drags out of its concealment. It searcheth every secret corner of the heart, and brings to light the hidden things of darkness.

God hath wisely reserved to himself the prerogative of seeing into our privacies, and discerning our thoughts: Otherwise, if every man knew perfectly every other man's inmost thoughts and most secret actions, we should appear to one another not men, but monsters. Such monsters doth drunkenness represent us. Against this, privacy is no defence, and darkness is no covering. It utters things which ought, and which ought not, to be revealed. It opens (as it were) a window into our breasts, and admits the day-light into the blackness and corruption which harbour there. Hence the subtile have formed a maxim,

maxim, if you would read a man thoroughly, to open the folds of his heart by drinking.

There is a secret pride in our nature, which discovers itself in every man at certain seasons, more or less, but never so much as when under the tyranny of this vice; which is giving the alarm to the world to humble us. If we would sooth our pride, we must conceal it: Otherwise, there is a proportionable share of pride in others, which, for its own sake, will not suffer ours to exalt itself.

In matters of intercourse and commerce in the world, it is always ten to one against the drunkard. It is easy to overcome that man, who is deprived of his best defence; and to defraud him of his goods, who hath already cheated himself out of his senses. It is no more than to kill the wounded, or to ruin the helpless.

Drunkenness hath this in common with other false friends, that it draws a man into a snare, and then leaves him in it. It is the most forward in leading on to the charge, and the most backward in securing
a safe

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkenness.* 443

a safe retreat. It urgeth us on to commit villanies, and then delivers us up to the tormentors. There is no vice which drunkenness doth not encourage and betray. It provoketh our enemy, and at the same time renders us incapable to defend ourselves, or to escape.—Thus is drunkenness *impolitic*, or *imprudent*. Again,

4. It is also *unreasonable*. It deprives us of our reason, and makes us to act like idiots. There is in them both the same incoherent speech, and antic gestures; with this great difference, that the drunkard makes himself so, but the idiot cannot help it. The drunkard becomes mad, under the direction and influence of his reason; and as folly advanceth, his wisdom deliberately gives way: So that distraction is his own choice; and he becomes a fool, out of pure love and respect for the character.

And the inconsistencies of a drunken man are as endless as folly itself, which knows no bounds. Hence the unfaithful step, and untoward utterance. Then it is,
most

most emphatically, that our strength is weakness, and our knowledge ignorance. It is true of this vice, which Solomon in another sense affirmeth of *oppression*, that it verily *maketh a wise man mad*.

That is an elegant description of the Psalmist, of the mariners tossed in the wide ocean, when he compares them to a man under the dominion of this frenzy: *They reel to and fro*, says he, *and stagger like a drunken man, and are "at their wit's end."* How is the brightest reason hereby fullied, and the light of the understanding, which the scripture calleth *the candle of the Lord*, put out! He that charmed with eloquence, and discoursed as if it had been the oracles of God, will in two hours time, by the help of this opiate, become irksome and foolish, and shall utter things which his sober reason would condemn, and which perhaps he will be ashamed of as long as he lives. If any necessity were laid upon a man, and he were compelled by any controuling power, to swallow a potion of any thing which would cause such a sudden and strange alteration in his understanding, he
would

would think it the sorest affliction that could befall him; and, like a madman in his sober intervals, he would lament and dread, as the greatest evil, the next returning fit of his distemper. How inexcusable therefore is that man, and how much less to be pitied, who voluntarily brings himself into that state, which the other trembles at the thought of?

And yet these are small things in comparison. I proceed therefore, in the

5th place, and observe further, That this vice is also *unjust*; and that, in an especial manner.

It is unjust to a man's self. Even the principle of self-preservation, which abides with a man the longest, fails him here; and having abandoned all others before, this likewise now forsakes him. He exposeth himself to poverty, and contempt, and pain. He deprives himself of all comforts; and enrageth his desire of enjoyment, by disappointing himself of the means to procure it. Instead of being honoured and esteemed, he becomes despised and pointed at. He inherits

inherits anguish and sickness, instead of health and ease; and robs himself of every blessing of life, for the satisfying of one single appetite, which yet is not satisfied after all; but increaseth still the more, the more it is indulged.

But if the injustice were to himself alone, we might suffer him to be miserable without restraint, and leave him to punish himself for his own offences; but he is unjust also to all others. By wasting his substance, and depraving his health and understanding, he prevents himself from doing that good, which otherwise he might, and ought to have done in the world. He becomes useless and burdensome to the community, and incapable of executing the duties of his station. His example, unseemly as it is, will be of evil influence, as there is no fashion so ugly, but some people will imitate it.

He robs his family of that support and maintenance, which the engagements of nature do exact from him; and leaves his children many times unprovided for in a wicked world, and consequently an easy prey to the cruel spoiler.

In

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkennes*, 447

In a word, the drunkard, as such, is the very reverse of the character given by the noble historian of his royal master: He is of all men "the most unworthy gentleman, the worst master, the worst friend, the worst husband, the worst father, and the worst christian." Or rather, he inverts St. Paul's character of that amiable grace of *charity*; which, whoever peruseth attentively, would almost think the apostle had drawn it up with this vice in his view, as a contrast to it: *Charity*, saith he, *suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, (or, as it is written in the margin, is not rash;) is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowlege, it shall vanish away. All which may be briefly summed up in this, that the charitable man is no drunkard.*

Last

Last of all, and to complete the charge, drunkenness is also *impious*, or *ungodly*: It is as great an affront or offence to God, as it is to man, and indeed infinitely greater; as much as God is higher than man, and the reverence due to the Creator is more and greater than that which is due to the creature.

God hath sufficiently declared his abhorrence of this vice in holy scripture. In the *old testament*, he declareth thus by the inspired penmen: One of them saith, *Be not amongst wine-bibbers,—for the drunkard shall come to poverty**. And again, *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise†*. Another saith, *Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them: They regard not (says he) the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands‡*. And again, *Wo unto them that are mighty to*

* Prov xxiii. 20, 21.

† Prov. xx. 1.

‡ Is. v. 11, 12.

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkenness.* 449

drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:—As the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff; so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.*

In the new testament we have many passages, which still further express God's displeasure against this vice. St. Peter adviseth, *Let the time past*, says he, *that is, before they were admitted into the state of christianity, suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, and such like; and the reason he gives is, because they shall give account to him, who is ready to judge the quick and dead†.* St. Paul, writing to Timothy and to Titus, says, *The dispensers of the mysteries of the gospel, and those who live according to Christ's doctrine, must not be given to wine‡; or, as he elsewhere expresseth it,*

* Is. v. 22. 24.

† 1 Pet. iv. 3, 5.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 3. Ib. iii. 8.

not given to much wine *. To the Romans he expresseth himself thus, *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness* †. To the Ephesians he says, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess* ‡. But above all, the same St. Paul, in two several epistles, reckons drunkards in the catalogue of offenders that *shall not inherit the kingdom of God* §.

But if we had not these plain declarations of scripture, the natural notion we have of God is, that he is a being of infinite purity; and therefore, if we apply the description I have given of this vice to this attribute of the Deity, we shall find the greatest repugnancy and contradiction imaginable: So that it is impossible for God to love that which in itself is so unlovely; or to acknowledge the work of his hands, when it is so mangled and defaced by intemperance and sensuality.

* Tit. i. 7. Ib. ii. 3.

† Rom. xiii. 13.

‡ Eph. v. 18.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v.

19, 20, 21.

Having

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkenness.* 451

Having thus urged these several arguments against this vice, I proceed, under my

III^d and last general head, to add some few words of *advice* and *direction*, and so conclude. The

1st thing I propose shall be in the words of Solomon: *Look not thou upon the wine, when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder**. Let us not incur so much pain for so small a pleasure; which endureth no longer than whilst a fluid substance is running some few inches downwards. Especially, let us not, for temporal joys, procure endless sorrows.

2. If we are as yet unexperienced in this vice, Let us learn to be wise from other men's follies. Let us behold another, whilst the fiend is in possession of

* Prov. xxiii. 31, 32.

him; and if we can think it an amiable character, and worthy of our imitation, let us act accordingly.

If we have been so unhappy as to be overtaken with this sin, Let that be a warning to us to offend no more. Sin is always an argument against itself. Every man, who hath been once guilty of it, hath incitements enough in his own breast to persuade him hereafter to forbear it.

3. If we find in ourselves a propension to this vice, and that we are too apt to be overcome by it when an occasion is offered, Let us keep out of the way of it; and when we pray unto God, not to lead us into temptation, Let us not run headlong into it ourselves. It is easier to avoid a temptation, than it is to conquer one. And in this there is the more need of caution, because those very excellencies, which constitute the most shining part of a good man's character, will be apt to betray him, and to become unto him an occasion of falling. That good-nature and easiness of temper, which render a man amiable
and

SERM. XXIV. *A Discourse on Drunkenness.* 453

and useful to the world, if he doth not add to them the wisdom of the serpent, will incline him too submissively to yield to the insinuations and importunity of evil company. Nay, that very wit and liveliness of parts, which, joined with the former good qualities, render a man's conversation delightful and entertaining, will be apt to betray him into too easy and dangerous a complaisance.

A man who pleaseth others is always pleased himself; which though it is a proof that we are designed for society, yet it is too apt to lead us into a vicious excess. In this gaiety of humour, it is odds but that, in order to please others, we condescend to please them too far; which we always do, when it is performed at the expence of our strength, and health, and reason, and conscience.

Previous consideration is never more necessary than in this instance; because, when there is the most need of it, reason is departed. In other sins, though a man lays aside his reason for the present, yet he hath it (as it were) within a call. Before he rusheth into the extremity, he hath it

in his power to retreat, and to recover himself. But the drunkard, every step he advanceth, departeth so much the farther from his defence: His wisdom dwindles into folly imperceptibly, and his senses forsake him he knows not how. It is hard to define, where sobriety ceaseth, and intemperance begins, and it is seldom discovered till it is past; and then the man wades forward, abandoned of his guide, till at last he is swallowed up in the fatal whirlpool.

4. In order to prevent the frequent temptations to this wickedness, Let us endeavour to have something else to do. The devil is most busy, when we are least employed. If we know not how to dispose of the next hour, we are in danger to spend it viciously. We ought therefore not only to employ our time, but to improve it to good purposes. Otherwise we shall force ourselves into that other extreme, of having recourse to this vice, as a remedy not only against idleness, but against thinking; of stupefying our senses, that we may get rid of our consciences; which is like pouring
oil

oil into the fire, in order to extinguish it.

5. And to conclude: It is a good rule which is laid down by the moralists, Always to live so, as if we were to die the next hour: And the reason is, because we may do so, for any thing we know to the contrary. And how should we be surprized, were we called out of the world in this posture, with the fumes of intemperance about us! No man surely would chuse to appear before his judge in such a disorder and confusion; and no man therefore ought to run the hazard of it; especially considering, that he who dies in such a condition, before the return of his reason, dies most certainly in a sin unrepented of. The very possibility of which is argument enough of itself to deter men from this practice.

Upon the whole, therefore, Let us pray unto God, that he will assist and enable us by his grace, so to live and to die; that we may hereafter be fit companions for those pure and holy spirits, who will inhabit the regions of the blessed.

S E R M O N XXV,

On Psalmody.

[By the Author of this Compilation.]

Ps. XLVII. I.

O sing unto God with the voice of melody.

I INTEND from these words to treat of that part of the public worship, which consists in the singing of psalms.

To express our gratitude in songs of praise, is founded in the nature of man, and consequently is as old as the creation; yea it was the employment of heaven before man was made, and will be so after the consummation of all things. But in discoursing upon psalmody, I shall ascend no higher than the Royal Author of my text; And shall

I. Consider the state of this matter under the Jewish dispensation.

II. I

II. I shall consider our obligations thereunto, as an act of christian worship. And,

III. I shall add some observations concerning the manner of performing it.

I. I AM to consider the state of this matter under the Jewish dispensation.

David was a proficient in the knowledge of sounds, and was himself both a performer in the service, and composed the words which were set to music by his chief musicians. He procured persons skilful in the art, at a royal expence; and gave all possible encouragement to the professors of it. He employed in his service no less than two hundred and fourscore and eight fingers and musicians *. It is indeed a loss to be lamented, that no footsteps of the ancient music are now to be found, whereby we might be enabled to form an adequate comparison between the ancient and modern music.

We read of mighty things performed by the musicians of old; that they could

* 1 Chron. xxv. 8.

transport a man to rage and fury, and immediately and in a moment quell the commotions of the soul, inspire the tender passions, and infuse the softnesses of love, or the extasies of devotion; nay, that they could charm even the brute creation, and move things senseless and inanimate.

But these are only the exaggerations of poets, or hyperbolical expressions of ancient authors, whose manner it was to represent things beyond the life; and it is in this instance as in many others, the more ancient the more figurative.

As to the moving of beasts and irrational creatures, this is false in nature and fact. Brutes are not delighted with the same sounds that please mankind; but rather they are disagreeable to them. And as to the influence which the ancient music had upon the human soul, that perhaps in a great measure may be true, and yet therein not preferable to the modern; for a good modern composition will do the same; especially if we consider, that one man is
more

more susceptible of impressions of this kind than another; and that something may be owing to the unusualness of the thing, for a person who hears music but seldom, or who never had heard it before, would be much more affected than he who hears it frequently.

Nevertheless, I will attribute to the ancient music its just praise. The human voice was the same then that it is now; and all instruments are more agreeable to the sensation of man, as they approach the nearer unto that standard. For God hath so framed our nature, that the voice of man is more acceptable to man than any other sound; and that, for social reasons, and also that we might have this, amongst the other ingredients of our happiness, within ourselves.

Some instruments likewise, especially of the vocal kind, might perhaps be nearly the same in ancient times, as they are now. Other instruments undoubtedly have received what are called improvements, and especially in extending to a much greater compass

compass of notes *. But it may be questioned (upon the principle aforegoing) whether this shall universally and without exception be deemed an improvement, as it deviates so much the further from nature, the standard whereof (as I said) is the human voice. And in fact those are not deemed the best compositions, which traverse the whole scale of a modern instrument, but are looked upon as extravagances, or rather distortions of fancy; and the most applauded compositions of the best masters, and the most applauded parts of those compositions, if we examine them, we shall find to be such, as take in no large compass of instrument.

The ancients generally followed nature: Hence the works of Euclid, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, and many others, have sustained their rank, through all the changes of times, and the vicissitudes of learning

* An instrument of ten strings David calls forth to be exercised upon extraordinary occasions, Ps. xxxiii. 2. xcii. 3. cxliv. 9. Perhaps their common instruments, as was most natural, comprehended an octave, and no more.

for two thousand years; and the reason is plain, because nature is the same now, that it was two thousand years ago.

Hence also the ancient painters and statuaries were never equalled, being contented not to mend, but only to imitate the works of God. Hence those striking proportions, in the naked body of man, which are exhibited in some of the ancient statues, affect the mind with an inexpressible satisfaction; whereas the like workmanship, employed upon the body of a man with his clothes on, would have the contrary effect, and leave the mind dissatisfied and uneasy, although we did not immediately see the reason of it: but the reason is this; the one is the imitation of the works of God, and the other of the works of a taylor.

I will not go about to define, how far we may proceed in the refinements of music before it becomes unnatural; but there are many reasons why, in a mixed congregation of people assembled for divine worship, it ought not to be exquisitely refined; some of which will be considered, before I shall
have

have ended this discourse: In the mean time, I shall only observe, that as by all appearances of antiquity the ancients followed nature much more than the moderns in all their compositions, which is the surest guide unto perfection; and David withal being the man after God's own heart, and the subject matter of the psalms (confessedly) inspired by God, it seemeth not likely, that he who dictated the song, would suffer it to be debased by the singer. And methinks that holy father *, who wished for three things, to wit, to have seen Christ in the flesh, St. Paul in the pulpit, and Rome in its ancient glory, might with an equal degree of laudable curiosity have added this fourth, namely, to have heard David at the head of his choir.

It may not be improper to add under this head, although by some it may be deemed a solecism, that the *language* in which David's psalms were composed is peculiarly adapted to a musical perform-

* St. Austin.

ance. In the Hebrew tongue, above all others, the sounds correspond with the thing signified, and therein it hath the most remarkable signatures of the language of nature. Matters of grief are expressed by slow-sounding syllables; of rage, by harsh and difficult pronunciations; and matters of joy gently glide away in sounds of easy and delightful utterance. I will not be tedious upon this head, and therefore shall only exemplify what I have said in one well-known instance. The expression in the Hebrew, which signifieth, *Praise ye the Lord*, hath nothing in it of that harshness, which these words do bear in English; and therefore the modern composers leave it untranslated; I mean, the term *Hallelujah*, which is a kind of *Gloria Patri* in miniature. There seemeth to be something enchanting in the very sound of it. So free it is from all ruggedness of accent, and plays upon the tongue with such liquid fluency, that when they have once taken it up, they know not how to leave it. They toss it to and fro, and transfuse it through all the variety of melody; catching

ing at every syllable, and every echo of a syllable; until at length, like an expiring taper (as it were exhausted of its substance) it languishes, trembles, and dies away.

I will not delay in examining how far the psalms of David were composed in *metre*. Rhyme, or a determinate number of feet or syllables, in expressing our sentiments, have no foundation in the nature of things, or of languages. These are refinements of later ages. And to attempt to reduce David's measures unto the like standard, seemeth to be an undertaking preposterous and absurd. And upon the whole, the Hebrew measures seem to be no otherwise than thus; that is to say, verses or lines, the latter part whereof correspondeth to the former by a kind of antithesis in the sense and signification, without any gingle in the sound, or artificial determination of the syllables as to number or quantity; but the expression flows as nature dictates. So that the difference between the most ancient and the modern versification is this; that in the former nature predominates; in the latter,

art

art hath the upper hand, and nature is made subservient to it; which in very deed is a contradiction, for art is, or should be, nothing else but an imitation of nature.

And so much concerning the Jewish psalmody. The

II^d THING I proposed was, To consider our obligations thereunto, as an act of christian worship.

AND here, in the first place I must observe, that we are not bound thereunto by any law of man; That is to say, there is no constitution, canon, rubric, decree of council, injunction of any prelate foreign or domestic, nor of the king as supreme head of the church, nor any act of the legislature, by which we are enjoined to the singing of psalms in God's public worship. The matter in short is this: Before the reformation, every bishop under the direction of the metropolitan, and he under the direction of the pope, when and so far as the pope's power prevailed in this realm, had authority to form a liturgy for his own diocese; and if he kept to the analogy of

faith and doctrine, all circumstances or modes of worship were left to his own discretion. Hence there were different services in different provinces, and in different dioceses within the same province, which were called the use of Sarum, the use of York, the use of Bangor, the use of Lincoln, and such like. Now, to avoid this confusion, in the first act of uniformity after the reformation, which established the book of common prayer, it was ordained, that that individual form, and no other nor otherwise, should be used throughout the realm: In which book there was no rubric or other direction for the singing of psalms, as a necessary act of worship; any more than there is in the same book, as it stands now altered and established at this day. But it is provided nevertheless, that “ it shall be lawful for
“ all men, as well in churches and chapels,
“ as other places, to use openly any psalms
“ or prayer taken out of the bible, at any
“ due time, not letting or hindering there-
“ by the service.” And from hence the singing of psalms hath been admitted between

between the several services, and at other proper intervals during the celebration of the divine offices.

And this is one, although the lowest, of our obligations hereunto, that it is allowed by our superiors; which they would not have done, had they not judged it conducive to edification.

A SECOND motive, and of somewhat an higher obligation, is this; that it habituates the people to a love of the divine service. —Every person approves that work which himself is employed in. There is a self-satisfaction which God hath implanted in every one, that he may not be beholden for his happiness to things without him; and to bear up his mind in the perverseness of human affairs. And it is one of the excellencies of our liturgy, that the people have a greater share in the service, than hath been allowed in any other established form, or than is practised in any of the dissenting congregations.

And this is a rule which will always hold, because the foundation is in nature.

Hence we may account for people's being so fond of their own offspring, and of their own speeches and actions, in which others perhaps see nothing that they can so much admire.

Hence, in the singing of psalms, the satisfaction doth not always arise from the excellency of the composition, but from the person himself being concerned in the execution. And upon the introduction of any new method of singing, they who bear no share in the performance are apt to conclude in favour of the former way; not because it is less uncouth and disagreeable, but because it is their own.

These indeed are disagreements which ought to be avoided; but in the mean time the thing itself is certain, that every man will take delight in that service, in which he himself is a performer.

A FURTHER motive hereunto, and of higher consideration, is this; that it is an handmaid to devotion, and is indeed itself an act of devotion, and that also of the most elevated kind; and upon that account

is

is recommended unto us, by the practice and precepts of our blessed Saviour and his apostles. To praise the benefactor for kindneses received, is the voice of nature. We cannot return unto God any equivalent for what he hath done for us, and therefore our hearts dilate themselves in songs of adoration. Prayer implies want and imperfection, and therefore is unsuitable for the voice of song; but thanksgiving implies the satisfaction of those wants, and consequently exults in the praises of the benefactor. It elevates our souls, and transports them into the regions of bliss.

AND this suggests a further recommendation of this service, that it conduces to the establishment of peace and mutual benevolence amongst men. Whilst we sing together in perfect harmony, it is impossible we should entertain any suggestions of animosity or revenge. It soothes the discordant passions, and calms our soul to love.—Only we should take care that the same be performed in a due manner.

And this is what I proposed for the subject of the

III^d HEAD of this discourse; namely, To add certain observations concerning our conduct in the execution. And,

FIRST of all, Let us not address ourselves thereunto with impetuosity and precipitation, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Vociferation is the least part of it; and to exclaim as loud as possibly we can, seemeth rather calculated to infuse terror than complacency; and more especially if a person hath a remarkably strong voice, and withal much zeal, he spoils the harmony by overbearing; and disappoints himself and others of the satisfaction which should arise, from a proportionable adjustment of the several parts of the composition. Besides, also, that it is an affront to all the rest; for every one hath a right to be heard in his turn: Even as in conversation, he who assumes more than his share of the discourse, intrenches upon the natural liberty of mankind, and consequently is a public nuisance.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, Let us not (on the other hand) apply ourselves thereunto with a spruce affectation, and an effeminate delicacy, unnatural to the English nation.—A grave solemn movement, especially where the several parts accompany each other in solemn counterpoint (as the musicians term it) seems best adapted for the common use of a popular congregation. A quick transition in any of the parts is improper, for reasons drawn from the nature of man, and from the nature of sounds. All persons have not a genius alike adapted to music; and those who have the least knowledge in any science, are frequently apt to make the greatest shew of it. This would create an insufferable jarring in the divine worship, if the performance depended upon any nice modulation in point of time or of voice. Besides, as I said, it is inconsistent with the nature of sounds. Sound doth not pass instantaneously, but moves in comparison by slow advances. In a church of any considerable dimensions, a short note is over at one end of the church, before it is heard, and consequently before it is begun,

begun, at the other end. And this is the cause, why a person at the low end of a church is always behind the rest of the congregation in his responses. And a variation in singing, in the point of time, if it were but for half a note, causeth as great a jumble, and discord, and confusion, as if the difference were as far as between heaven and earth. For it is in musick as in other things, that the most agreeable is parted by a very narrow interval from the most disagreeable.

And as too much air, although perhaps agreeable in itself, ought to be excluded out of the *composition*; much more ought all affected air to be excluded out of the *performance*. This spoils all harmony at all times, and in all places. Where two sounds or more do coincide and are agreeable, any one of those sounds variegated with a tremulous exaltation or depression, although but for a very little, is capable to make the coincidence most shocking and monstrous; and being beside the composer's intention, ought not to be introduced by persons who probably understand

stand not the first principles of composition.

And as all unnatural decorations ought to be avoided between the individual notes, much more ought all meretricious ornaments (as I presume to call them) between the several parts of the performance. And this is often the case where that noble instrument an organ hath been introduced. It is not of so much concern to the congregation, to know how nimbly the artist can move his fingers, as it is that they should not be interrupted in the most solemn part of their worship of almighty God. Sixteen impertinent preludes and interludes, in singing two staves of David's psalms, is too much for any purpose of devotion. And it is just as natural, as for a man to walk steadily and sedately for six or eight paces, and then run, leap, and dance as fast as ever he can for six or eight more, and so on for a quarter of an hour together. In *speaking* it would be equally ridiculous, and even in *singing*; if a man should go about to sing the very identical notes which are played upon the instrument,

ment, with the alternate and almost instantaneous changes, from quick to slow, from light to grave, it would excite a very different kind of sensation from that of a solemn, grave, and serious act of religious adoration.

LASTLY, and to conclude all; Let it be remembered, that the singing of psalms, although it is a commendable and useful appendage of religious worship, yet it is *but* an appendage of it. *I will have mercy, saith God, and not sacrifice. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, (saith the prophet) and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil?—He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

A good life, above all other things, is the best handmaid to devotion; and is especially necessary for that branch of it,
which

which I have been all along speaking of. I have in this discourse deduced all my arguments from nature. Music itself is but the science of nature; and the rules of composition are nothing but observations drawn from nature, of what is agreeable or disagreeable to the sensation of hearing. What is agreeable to nature will always hold, and what is disagreeable is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. But above all the contradictions to nature which I have observed, this one thing is the most unnatural, for a man with an evil conscience to go about to sing. It seemeth a little absurd for a man, who perhaps hath been guilty of a debauch over night, to set up to sing to the praise and glory of God next morning.

As a mind loaded with oppression is unfit for the triumphs of song, much more so is a conscience burdened with guilt. Alas! what hath he to do with singing, whose portion (unless he repenteth) shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The voice of distress is always
broken

broken and inharmonious. Therefore, that we may sing well, we must live well.

Or howsoever our singing may be agreeable to ourselves, it will not be acceptable unto God. *If I incline unto wickedness in mine heart, saith the psalmist, the Lord will not bear me.* Yea, Solomon assures us, that *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* Therefore let us purify our hearts and minds, and let no evil thing cleave unto us; and then our devotions, howsoever offered, will be accepted.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

